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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A CASE STUDY OF A PRINCIPALSHIP

BY

© ROBERT JOHN AINSWORTH

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

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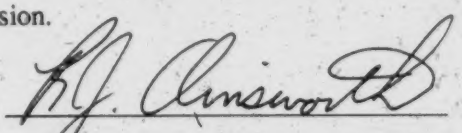

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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A Case Study of a Principalship

Submitted by Robert John Ainsworth in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration.

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DATE: June 11, 1991

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Buffy and daughters Heather and Gillian. They have worked as hard as I, endured changes in their lives and forgone opportunities so that I might pursue this dream. Throughout, they have never failed in their love and support. Only with them with me was this project possible.

ABSTRACT

This research project is an interpretive case study of one principal in a rural K - 9 school. It sought to understand what it meant for that person to be a principal within the context in which he worked. Non-participant observations were followed by reflective interviews over a number of sessions spread through a three month period. This design produced discussions grounded in the observed situation of the principal and led to an understanding of the rationale for his actions and his beliefs about the administration of a school.

The findings of the study are reported in three parts. First, the setting of the school, the staff, the principal and the researcher are described. In this section, a typical day has been created from incidents taken from all the observation sessions. This is included to allow readers to develop a sense of the context in which this man worked. The second part looks at what the principal did and his reflections about these actions. The data are reported in nine categories:

1) Communication
2) Establishing and Maintaining Relationships
3) Managing Change
4) Decision Making
5) Financial Questions
6) Routine Items
7) Non Routine Items
8) Importance of Different Issues
9) Administration and Leadership

The third section lists six themes which are emergent in this study and outline the meaning of being a principal for the principal. The six themes identified were:

1) The Place has to Run
2) Accountability and Control
3) People Make the Place Run
4) Knowledge is Power
5) Knowing Where the Place is Going
6) Leadership

The final chapter provides a summary of the study, links the findings to the literature on the principalship, includes the researchers own personal reflections, and suggests some implications from the study for research and practice. The combination of observation followed by reflection used to gather data in this study, is recommended as a useful method for promoting growth and development in both students of administration and those working in the field.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of those who have made it possible for this project to be successfully completed. Without their support and encouragement, this study would not have been completed. First and foremost, I would like to thank the principal who gave so freely of his time and expertise. We have grown to be even better friends through this exercise. I have learned much from our shared experience and wish him all the best for a long and productive retirement.

Second I would like to thank my advisor for all of her support, encouragement, advice and wisdom. The quality of this document is due in large measure to her. I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to work with her on this project.

Third, I would like to thank the members of my committee for their participation and for their insightful comments and questions.

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Chapter 1

A CASE STUDY OF A PRINCIPALSHIP

Much of the literature in the field of educational administration has examined specific aspects of a principal's work. The basic premise of this type of research is that the whole is equal to the sum of the parts, therefore, by examining the parts one can come to understand the whole. Textbooks in educational administration follow this pattern; Hoy and Miskel (1987) and Campbell, Corbally, and Nystrand (1983) have devoted chapters to topics such as power, leadership, communication, conflict and change. Snyder (1983) wrote about instructional leadership in schools. Gronn (1983) examined the use of talk as an instrument in the exercise of power. March (1984) and Greenfield (1986) have looked at the interaction between values and a moral basis for one's actions and administrative behaviour. Many writers have examined and offered theoretical positions on a vast array of aspects of administrative behaviour in journal articles and books.

Mintzberg (1973) sought, through observations of administrators, to determine what tasks managers actually performed. Martin and Willower (1981) and Kmetz and Willower (1982) applied this methodology to examine principals' work in schools. These studies conclude, among other things, that administrative work is fast paced, fragmented, and has an emphasis on verbal interactions to accomplish a variety of tasks. These studies have been challenged for not examining why the administrators studied acted as they did. Furthermore, they do not give any insight into what the

administrators intended by their actions, what the actions meant for the administrators and their staff, or the context within which the actions occurred.

A group of recent studies (Renihan and Renihan, 1984; Manasse, 1985; Sergiovanni, 1984; Miklos, 1983) have looked more generally at effective schools and effective principals. These studies recognize that certain schools appear to be more successful than others. They recognize the pivotal role of the principal in these effective schools (Hall et al., 1984; Dwyer, Lee, Barnett, Filby,Rowen, Albert, and Kijimoto, 1985; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1986; and Manasse, 1985) and attempt to identify the aspects or attributes of these roles. These studies have provided lists of characteristics of effective schools and principals, or typologies of roles which effective principals are seen to possess. Following this line of research has led other writers to suggest ways in which principals can act to improve school effectiveness (Hall et al., 1984; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1986; and Manasse, 1985).

The Far West study by Dwyer et al., (1985) attempted to look in depth at the activities of seven exemplary principals. Using a case study methodology, these interpretive studies found that principals can play a key role in determining the effectiveness of the school. They found that while these principals had differences in style and approach, they all had clear visions for their schools and sought to implement these visions through their day to day activities. When their actions are viewed in terms of the beliefs held by the principals, these actions take on a sense of purpose and one can understand the significance of that purpose in terms of the principal's vision.

In an analysis of the implications of the Far West studies, Greenfield (1986) comments:

> While concepts like instructional leadership, management, and administration dominate discussions, descriptions, and interpretations of

> the work of school principals, they provide little leverage on understanding the meaning of or even adequately describing the nature of a principal's work activities and behaviours. . . . they do not adequately describe what principals actually do, nor do they help one decipher the meaning of those actions in a given context. (p. 131)

Merriam (1985), Bogdan and Biklen (1982), and Guba and Lincoln(1982), in writings concerning interpretive research designs and methods, contend that these research methods lead to an understanding of the purpose and meaning of actions within the context being studied. Schools are highly complex social organizations with a variety of forces and factors influencing what occurs each day. Interpretive studies allow one to recognize this complexity and the multiple levels of reality in organizations.

Research Question

This study focused on one person in one school using an interpretive case study methodology. This design was chosen in response to a sense of frustration with the standard methodologies which is echoed in the quote by Greenfield (1986) above. Reading and discussing concepts such as leadership, power, motivation, vision, supervision or educational change in graduate courses left the writer with a sense that these concepts examined alone did not reflect the reality of life in a school. Much of the complexity and interrelated nature of activities in the school are lost when one focuses on individual aspects of administrative behaviour. Every school is different and so generalizations must be viewed in terms of each school's unique context. Study methodologies which utilize surveys or single interviews did not seem to address the question of the meaning of a person's action in a context or the complexity of the context.

Interpretive studies by definition are loosely structured in the beginning and utilize on-going data analysis to refine the purpose and goals of the study. This study sought to examine one principal's actions and what he understood about those actions. This led to the formation of two broad research questions.

1) What does it mean to be a principal?

2) What meanings does this principal give to his actions?

As the project progressed, on-going analysis showed that certain major themes were important in understanding this principal's actions. These included knowing his staff and their individual differences, empowering his staff, leadership by example, use of procedures and routines, and the impact of his vision and personal beliefs on his actions. Deductive analysis of observations and interview transcripts produces an understanding grounded in the reality perceived by the participants in the situation. This study looked at what one principal did on several occasions, why he did those things, what was important to him , and how those beliefs affected his actions.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for a number of reasons. It provides a description of the work of a principal in a rural Alberta school and his reflections on what he does. This study examines the impact of a principal's philosophy and values on his actions. Much of the literature on the principalship has presented a view of the principal's work as being fragmented, subject to repeated interruptions, and agenda's set by others. This study describes a principal who sought to take charge of his own agenda. He did this by developing systems for dealing with much that was routine and by choosing to involve himself in those activities which spoke to beliefs and values he held for himself

and the school. His choices were clearly influenced by his philosophy and values rather than being subject to the whims and desires of others.

The examples of the principal's reflections on his actions offered by this study are also significant. A synthesis of observations and reflections allows the reader to understand the principal's actions, praxis and beliefs. Thus the report of the study offers a richer, more holistic understanding than would have been available from an study utilizing either observations or interviews alone.

An understanding of the linkage between the actions and intentions of one principal may be of use to others in reflecting upon their own situations. This descriptive study may lead readers to bring some of their intentions to the conscious level where they are available for examination, reflection and possible adjustment.

This study provides an example of the process of reflection on the actions of the principal. An observer sees what incidents occur, what pressures are brought to bear on the principal studied, and how these dealt with. The discussions based on this shared experience, and the reflections about why the principal acted, produced valued insights into their beliefs for both the principal and the researcher. For the researcher, the opportunity to discuss his ideas with a very experienced person in a real context without the normal risks and responsibilities of being a principal, was also valuable. Both principals, in the pilot and main study, commented that they benefitted from an opportunity to reflect on the events the author had observed. The combination of observation and reflection resulted in discussions grounded in a shared set of experiences and led to clear understanding of the relationship between the principal's actions, his vision for the school and his personal beliefs. This methodology has significant implications for further research and the design of programs for those interested in careers in school administration. The effectiveness of this experience in

assisting the researcher's examination of the issues and potential actions in a non-threatening reflective environment recommends the experience to others.

Assumptions

The findings of this study are grounded in observations of the actions and reflections on these actions by the principal. This type of study is predicated on several assumptions. One must assume that the principal behaved in his ordinary fashion, that the process of being observed did not significantly alter how he acted. The observations were of varied length and were carried out over an extended period. The researcher came to be accepted around the school. The principal's actions followed consistent patterns throughout the observation periods leading to the expectation that this assumption is valid.

A second assumption is that the principal reflected his beliefs honestly and without reservation. This assumption was tested by examining the transcripts of the interviews for consistency over time. During the transcription of the interview tapes, issues or questions arose which were recorded in a notebook to be pursued in the next interview. As well, the principal was observed dealing with similar situations in a consistent fashion during subsequent observations. Certain questions were addressed during more than one interview and the principal's comments reflected a high degree of consistency. Listening to the tapes repeatedly revealed that he did not seem hesitant to answer or unwilling to discuss any issue indicating a lack of hostility or reservation.

A final assumption of this type of study is that the researcher possessed the appropriate research and analytic skills with which to carry out this type of study, as well as the experience and knowledge to understand what had occured and accurately analyse the situation. The pilot phase of this project allowed the researcher to practise these skills and to have the results of his analysis examined by his adviser and research

methods professor. Throughout the data analysis and writing stages, the categories and findings have been read and discussed with the principal observed, the researcher's wife - also a teacher, and the project adviser. This process of discussion, elaboration and revision served to clarify the findings and validate the first part of this assumption.

Validation of the second part of this assumption requires an examination of the researcher himself. Within this type of study, the researcher is viewed as the main research instrument. Therefore, an outline of the background and experience of the researcher, in Chapter 3, provides the reader with information on which to judge the researcher's qualifications. At the time when data was gathered for the study, the researcher had been a teacher in a number of rural jurisdictions for eleven years.

Delimitations

This is a case study and not an ethnography. It is delimited in that it examined the actions and reflections of one principal to gain an understanding of how he chose to deal with his work as the administrator of a school. No attempt was made to gain an understanding of how others in the school viewed the actions of the principal. Others in the school may have been observed and their conversations recorded, but the meanings attributed to these were those of the principal and the researcher with no attempt being made to verify these understandings with them. Nor was an attempt made to compare the actions and understanding of the actions of this principal with those of any others. By examining the thick description of what was done and said, readers may be able to compare their own situations and actions with those of the principal studied. No attempt is made to define the generalizability of the findings of this study.

Limitations

A number of factors were unique to this school and may act to limit the study. First, the school was the only school in a rural Alberta Roman Catholic School District. This resulted in de facto school based budgeting and a closer interaction between the administration of the school and the school board, than would be found in a larger jurisdiction. The secretary-treasurer of the district worked from within the school building and the jurisdiction shared the services of a superintendent with several other small separate boards. The administrative relationship between the principal and elected school board members was very direct and the principal attended most parts of most school board meetings. While this is not unusual for this type of jurisdiction, it is not the norm in larger more decentralized jurisdictions.

Second, the study was limited in that the data for this study were gathered during the spring. Many issues and events in schools happen on an annual cycle and many decisions which affect the operation of the school are made early in the school year. The process through which these decisions were made and the actions of the principal at the time were not available to the researcher. This history of the school becomes part of the findings of this study only to the extent that the principal recalled these events and discussed them.

Third, the study is limited in that no attempt was made to follow up the interactions of the principal with others, such as the vice-principal, other teachers, support staff, parents, members of the board, students, and so on, to determine their perceptions and understandings of why events occurred as they did and what issues were important. While granting that these interactions are important, they are beyond the scope of this study.

Finally, the findings of this study may be limited in that the process of conducting the research may have caused a change in the way in which the principal dealt with or looked at issues. Thus the process being studied may change due to being studied. This concern was discussed during the reflective interviews. The principal commented that he did not feel that he would have acted in a different fashion had I not been observing him, but that he was aware that he was looking back reflectively to a greater extent than he had in the past.

Overview of the Report

This research involved the use of a case study methodology with reflective interviews to gain an understanding of the meaning of being a principal for one person. Chapter one has introduced the study and the research question. Chapter two outlines the methodology used. Chapter three, which reports the findings of the study, begins with a description of the background of the principal, researcher, staff, school, and community. The second section contains a description of a typical day in the life of the principal, grounded in the observations. Several categories of actions taken and issues dealt with are discussed in the third section. The fourth and final portion of chapter three presents a discussion of six major themes. Chapter four presents a summary of the study, reflections in relation to the literature, personal reflections and implications for research and practice.

Chapter 2

RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter describes the design of the study. Those factors which influenced the choice and selection of the principal studied, is then outlined. A case study methodology was chosen because it, "results in an intensive, holistic description and analysis of the phenomenon or social unit being studied" (Merriam, 1985, p. 206). The chapter goes on to describe the process by which data were collected and analysed. The final section provides a discussion of ethical considerations of the study and an examination of the trustworthiness of the data.

Research Design

This project sought to develop an understanding of what it meant for one person to be the principal of one school. His actions were observed and reflective interviews were conducted. During these interviews, the was asked to reflect or look back on what had happened and to talk about why he had acted as he did. This allowed the researcher could come to understand, within the context of that situation, this principal's actions, intentions and beliefs. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) and Guba and Lincoln (1982) contend that studies seeking to understand the meanings associated with human actions are best done within a naturalistic or qualitative paradigm. Bogdan and Biklen (1982, pp. 27 - 29) list five characteristics of qualitative research; it is done in a natural setting with the researcher as the key instrument ; it is descriptive; it is concerned with process rather than simply outcomes or products; data tend to be

analysed inductively; and, meaning is a central concern. In this paradigm, the nature of reality is viewed as having multiple, interrelated aspects which can only be studied in context . Reality is not seen as a single entity which can be fragmented and the parts studied. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) say that, "reality comes to be understood to human beings only in the form in which it is perceived" (p. 32). Thus, the researcher is viewed as a data gathering instrument engaged in on-going observation, analysis, and verification. This is an inductive approach. Any final understanding is grounded in the observational data and verified within the context being studied.

The case study methodology was chosen as the most appropriate for this project. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) characterize the design of a case study as represented by a funnel. In the initial stages, observations are broad ranging as one looks for clues on how to proceed. As one gathers data, the observations are reviewed and examined and one begins to focus into more directed data collection and analysis (p. 59). Initially, this study was very loosely structured, but as time went on the issues examined became much more focused. Two major data gathering techniques were decided upon. Participant observations were chosen to give the researcher a sense of the issues and events the principal faced, the context of his work, and the actions he took. Reflective interviews after the observations were designed to gain an understanding of why the principal acted as he did and how he perceived the situations which had been observed.

Methodology

Data were gathered for this study using observation, audio recordings of conversations the principal had during the observation session, and semi-structured reflective interviews. Anecdotal field notes were recorded in longhand during the observations. Audio tapes were transcribed following the sessions and used in on-

going analysis. A pilot study was conducted to provide the researcher with practise in the techniques used in the main study. The questions for the initial interview were derived from the initial observation session. In subsequent interviews, initial questions sought elaboration on items from the observations of that day, and subsequent questions arose from analyses of previous sessions. This "analysis in the field" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p. 146) allowed the researcher to focus more clearly on the major themes which developed. Through the use of reflective interviews, the researcher was able to "try out ideas and themes on the subjects" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p. 152). The goal of this study was to achieve an understanding of how this principal understood his work. Observations and interviews over an extended period of time served to develop a large body of data, thus enabling the researcher to provide a thick and rich description of the actions of this principal (Guba and Lincoln, 1982,p. 247). The actions speak the beliefs and through reflection and discussion lead one to an understanding of what being a principal means for this man.

Choice of Co-Researcher

The principal became both the subject of the study and part of the research team in this study. His actions were the basis of our discussions and his reflections served to clarify issues and support judgements as to the trustworthiness of the data. The time commitment required of the principal was longer than usually asked of a participant in a research project. This commitment extended over the four months, during which the active data gathering and initial analysis was done, and on through the following three years when the researcher returned to full time teaching and continued the writing stage of the project on a part time basis. As parts of the thesis were composed, they have been read and commented on by the principal. Thus he has been a co-researcher as much as the subject of the research.

The principal was known to the researcher for several years. Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p. 120) comment on the importance of an open and honest relationship between the researcher and those studied. Within a relationship of this type, clearer understandings could be developed and the findings should have increased trustworthiness. This relationship could only develop over a period of time and thus it was more expedient to work with someone known than to establish a research relationship with another person.

The co-researcher was principal of a K to 9 school which was the only school operated by the Separate School District in a large Alberta town. He had taught for over thirty years and been a principal or vice-principal for all but the first two years of his career. He had been the vice-principal of the school in which the researcher had begun his teaching career, and they had remained friends through the ensuing years. The co-researcher had the ability to be reflective, to view his own actions with detachment, and to describe which factors caused him to deal with a situation as he did.

Ethical Considerations

A study of this nature presents an intimate view of the beliefs and actions of a principal and members of his staff. Every effort has been made to protect the identity of all concerned and to ensure that materials gathered for this study could not pose a threat to anyone involved.

Initial contact with the principal and his superintendent was made by telephone and followed with a letter (see Appendix 1 and 2). The purpose of the study and the expected commitment of time were explained to the co-researcher and his superintendent prior to a request for participation. In addition, the right to withdraw from the project at any stage, or to request that any material be deleted from the report

was explained. The identity of the principal, the school, school system and town was changed or not used and this protection was assured to those whose permission was sought. Certain descriptive features of the school and the community have also been changed to ensure the anonymity of all involved.

The researcher was concerned that members of staff of the school would perceive a threat in that conversations and interactions they had with the principal would be recorded, therefore, in the transcript, teacher comments were labeled "T" with no identifying comments to show which teacher it was. The study, its purpose and methodology were explained at a staff meeting and all were assured of their right to have the tape recorder turned off and for the researcher to leave when they talked to the principal. Requests of this nature were received and respected.

Data Collection

Data were collected over six visits to the school and the principal's home between April and July of 1988. The initial visit to the school was during a regularly scheduled staff meeting when the researcher was introduced to the staff and explained the purposes and techniques to be used in the study.

Observation sessions ranged between one half and and three quarters of a school day. The researcher timed his arrival and departure from the school so that before and after school activities were also observed. During observation sessions, the principal wore a wireless microphone connected to a tape recorder. The researcher also wore a microphone and portable tape recorder which picked up both voices. Thus, most conversations were recorded. After ensuring that the equipment was working properly, the researcher followed the principal on his regular activities in the school.

Most observation sessions began and ended with a natural break in the school day. The researcher would arrive before school so that he was there and organized when the principal arrived. They would go to the staff room for a cup of coffee and sit down to chat with the staff as they came in. During this time, the portable tape recorder worn by the researcher was recording and the researcher wrote brief anecdotal notes. These notes were purposely brief in that the principal was the focus of the study, rather than the staff. Issues which the principal discussed with teachers and questions which the researcher wished the principal to elaborate on were noted down. As class time approached, the teachers would leave to go to their rooms and the principal moved through the general office to his own office. More detailed written notes were taken at this time, noting some of what was said, what the principal did, who he talked to, impressions the researcher had and questions for reflection. An example of these notes is found in Appendix 4.

Initially, these notes formed the basis of the reflective interviews. After the observation sessions, the researcher took a period of time to review his notes and prepare for the reflective interview. As the notes were reread, the researcher developed questions which were added to the anecdotal notes. The principal was asked to elaborate on and reflect about the things which had occurred during the day. By proceeding through the events of the day in a chronological sequence, the team was able to reflect on most events from the day. Issues were chosen for reflection by the researcher, initially because of a desire for elaboration or explanation of the principal's rationale. Later, as an understanding of the situation developed, the questions tended to focus on issues which reoccured or were of importance to the principal. Subsequent interviews followed this pattern with the addition of questions which had arisen during the transcription and analysis of the tapes. The final visit was during the summer

holidays and consisted entirely of elaboration and discussion of questions from previous sessions.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was an on-going process which began with the initial observation session and has continued into the writing stage. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) state that, "Data analysis involves working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important, and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others." (p.145). A total of fourteen ninety minute audio tapes were used to record conversations in the school and reflective interviews. In later observation sessions, the portable recorder worn by the researcher was used to a greater extent. During times when the principal was working quietly at his desk, reading, or walking down the hallway the recorder was turned off. Thus a tape could record a longer period than ninety minutes. Between observation sessions, the researcher transcribed the tapes onto a word processor. Observation and interview tapes resulted in two hundred five pages of one and one half spaced typed transcripts.Three copies of each transcript were made. One copy was kept intact in a binder, and the others were used to develop categories. Each tape was played at least twice while the researcher commuted to and from the university. Personal transcription and repeated listening to the tapes gave the researcher a very good understanding of what was contained in the transcripts.

Questions for elaboration and categories within the data arose as the process continued and these were then discussed with the principal. Most of the transcripts were read by the principal to ensure their accuracy and to allow him to elaborate on any points he wished to clarify. The principal found that the transcripts were accurate and that little clarification was needed. The process which was very time consuming for

him resulted in limited improvement in our understanding and was discontinued in the later sessions. The principal did read and comment on the "Report of the Findings" as outlined in Chapter III. He felt that no changes to the document were needed.

Development of Categories

Initial categories or concerns were noted by going over the anecdotal notes between observation sessions and the reflective interview. Therefore, the initial category would include an event from the observation notes and transcripts and a set of questions and answers from the reflective interview. "The Cut-Up-and-Put-in-Folders Approach" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p.166) was used to organize the data categories. Since some quotations seemed relevant to more than one category, a second copy of the transcripts was often needed for cutting. The transcripts were printed with each line numbered so that each portion of the transcripts was labeled by a unique identifier. These have been used in the reporting of the results. Between fifty and sixty categories of data were initially established. Several categories were later collapsed, renamed and in some cases deleted.

Development of Themes

Prior to the last two interviews an original framework was sought for these data categories which would provide a response to the research question. A set of statements of beliefs was withdrawn from the interview data and presented to the principal during the final interview. These statements served to test the trustworthiness of the data and formed the basis for understanding this principal's view of his work. The nature of the research design allowed the researcher and co-researcher to examine issues in some depth. Themes were made evident by repeated comments of a very similar nature and the observation of similar events dealt with in similar ways.

Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p.172) warn of the difficulty in moving from the data collection and analysis stage to the writing stage. This occurred with the researcher who ended his period of leave from his employer with a sense of frustration at being unable to present his understandings in a reasonable form. The numbers of categories, the complexity of the issues and the overlapping nature of the data made any written description seem inadequate. Over the course of two years, the tapes were listened to, data were again reviewed, and the transcripts reread. Time has provided a perspective on the body of data as a whole and a sense of confidence in the understanding of it which led to the writing of this report.

Trustworthiness of the Data

Guba and Lincoln (1982, p.246) suggest that researchers attend to four major criteria to demonstrate the trustworthiness of a natualistic study. These are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility, in this study, refers to the degree to which the researcher has represented the co-researcher's view of reality appropriately (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p.246). Guba and Lincoln (1982) go on to suggest six techniques to "safeguard against loss of credibility or to continually test for it" (p. 247). Five of these have been utilized in this study. "Prolonged engagement at a site" and "Persistent observation" happened as a result of the extended period of time the researcher spent in the school. "Peer debriefing" and "Member checks" occurred through discussions held between the researcher and other graduate students, professors, and advisor during the course of analysis and writing. The role of respondent as co-researcher is evident here in that the respondent was asked during the data collection phase and since, to comment on the

researcher's understanding of his actions and beliefs, to read transcripts, and to read this document as it has been produced.

Transferability

Transferability of the results of this study to other situations has never been a goal of this study. It seeks understanding of the meanings implicit in a situation. Readers of this study may be able to achieve some degree of transfer to their own situations in that a conscious effort has been made to include "thick description of the context of the study" (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p.247). Any judgements of transferability must be made by the reader of the study.

Dependability

Naturalistic studies have emergent designs and this makes the replication of a study more difficult. "The naturalist defines the concept of dependability to mean stability after discounting such conscious and predictable (but rational and logical) changes." (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p.247). Within this study, "overlap methods" (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p.247) and "thick description"(Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p.247) were used. Observation periods extended over a period of time and similar situations occurred on several occasions. In that the actions of the principal were fairly consistent and his responses to reflective questions remained consistent, the understandings would seem to have greater support. The researcher would suggest that this methodology of repeated non-participant observation, followed by analysis and reflective interviews could be replicated as a method of gaining understanding of how other principals understand their work. Those understandings and the themes one finds within them might well be quite different than those found in this study. The people in this school and the issues they faced have changed and so it would be very difficult to exactly repeat this study.

Confirmability

Guba and Lincoln contend that, "The onus of objectivity ought to be removed from the inquirer and placed on the data; it is not the inquirer's certifiability we are interested in but the confirmability of the data." (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p.247) "Triangulation" and "Practicing reflexivity" (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p.248) are recommended techniques. Triangulation or seeking support for an understanding from a variety of observations and reflections was practiced in this study. As the researcher felt he had come to recognize something in the way the principal worked, this was discussed in the interviews and watched for in subsequent observation sessions. The design involved reflective interviews which provided opportunities for the principal and the researcher to check their understanding. The researcher and his advisor also engaged in member checks as the progress of the study was discussed and difficulties in understanding were resolved. Finally, it is felt that thick descriptions and numerous direct quotations have been provided so that readers are able to confirm their own understandings from the data reported.

Reference Codes

Reference codes are used in the report of the findings to identify the portion of the transcripts from which the idea or quotation was taken. Included below is a list of these codes with their meanings.

Ob#	Observation Number
T#	Tape number - Tapes from each session were numbered sequentially
N	Anecdotal notes written by the researcher during observation sessions

RI#	Reflective interview number
Pt#	Part number - Some observations and reflective interviews became long and were divided into parts generally at the end of an audio tape
TC	Log of preliminary conversation held with the principal during teachers' convention
\# - #	This refers to the line numbers between which the referenced section is found

Thus, a reference such as (RI4Pt3T2\278-280) refers to "Reflective Interview four, Part three which was found on tape two of that session and the quote is found between lines 278 and 280 inclusive.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the research design of this study. The study was a interpretive case study seeking understanding of how a principal understood his work. It was done within a qualitative paradigm. The selection and contact of a respondent were discussed and that the commitment made led the respondent to be considered as a co-researcher. Ethical considerations in the study and the selection of the respondent were then addressed. Observation and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data, much of which was recorded on audio tapes. Data analysis was described as the process of transcribing these tapes and reviewing the data for categories and themes. The final section of this chapter addresses questions of the trustworthiness of the data and study.

Chapter 3

REPORT OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter reports the observations of the principal's actions and his reflections on these. It begins with a brief description of the setting, the size of the school and staff, and the professional background of the principal and the researcher. The second section is a composite typical day. It is not a report of an actual day from the observations, but rather has been compiled with incidents from all of the observation periods. This was done to give a sense of the events of a typical day and to show the principal's actions within the context being observed. The third section consists of sets of incidents and reflections which have been grouped to show the major aspects of this principal's beliefs about his work. Finally, the themes which arose from the data are described.

Context of the Study

Setting

The school is located near the northern edge of a medium sized rural town and draws students from the rural area as well as the community itself. It is the only school operated by a small rural Separate School District. The student body numbers about 450. Kindergarten to Grade Nine are taught in the school. The high school students attend the high school operated by the Public School System.

The school was built in a series of stages, but is modern, well equipped and well maintained. It is a single story structure except for the newest addition. The main entrance has the general office, vice-principal's office, staff work room and staff room to the right and the principal's office to the left. Beyond the principal's office, the school district maintains its office. The school is built in a misshapen H pattern. To the right, past the staff room, the hallway joins a long wing with primary and some upper elementary grades and to the left is another wing with the rest of the elementary and Junior High classrooms. Across the hall from the front entry and attached to the school is the gymnasium. The school has two attached portable classrooms and has recently completed construction of a small addition. This provides two more classrooms, a counselling room and the lower level will house a new office for the School District and the Secretary-Treasurer with a separate entrance.

Special programs are offered in computers, learning assistance, resource room, and counselling. Subjects in the Junior High are taught by subject area specialists. Specialization in the elementary is much more limited. The school has gymnasium facilities, playing fields, and a well equipped library.

The researcher observed that the school was neat and well maintained. The outside lawns and landscaping were cut regularly and looked pleasant. The hallways, washrooms and other common areas were clean and free from noticeable litter. This was true even after class changes and at the end of the day. Walking through the school during one class change, the researcher was approached by students who did not recognize him and asked if he was in need of directions. Students moved to their next classes without undue loitering while talking to their friends in a pleasant fashion. During class time, many classrooms had their doors open and students were observed working in their desks, engaged in discussions, and working together on projects.

The staff treated each other in a friendly and open manner. The researcher had the impression that this was a school in which people were happy and proud to work and learn.

Staff

The school is staffed with 25 teachers and administrators - 6 male and 19 female, 4 teacher aides, a school secretary, a head caretaker and 3 cleaning staff. The school district offices are in the same building and the Secretary-Treasurer and her secretary join the staff for coffee breaks, lunch, and are included in all social activities. The teachers live in the community or on small farms in the district. Most of the teachers have degrees and several are taking evening and summer school courses. Their experience ranges from beginning teachers to thirty plus years. The school has hired some teachers recently as the community has grown and the student population is increasing.

Administrative Structure

The school district shares the services of a regional superintendent with several other small separate districts. The principal attends all School Board meetings and works closely with both the School Board and the Secretary Treasurer in hiring staff, evaluations, and budgeting. Thus the principal is responsible for many of the duties of an assistant superintendent in a larger system. Both the principal and vice-principal have teaching responsibilities. The principal teaches about one eighth time and the vice-principal teaches about one half time.

Background of the Principal

Ron Anthony (pseudonym) was born in a rural community in central Alberta, the eldest of three sons. He is of medium build with dark hair beginning to grey. He

has never married. He is very personable, making friends easily and maintaining contact with people in places he has taught. He has a wonderful ability to remember people, their names and where he met them. Many former students have maintained contact with him and he has been invited to numerous weddings of former students. In past summers, he has travelled widely. He enjoys reading about and visiting areas with historical significance and has a great interest in Great Britain. Recently he served as a Member of a Project Overseas team sponsored by the Canadian Teacher's Federation offering a summer school program for six weeks to teachers in Sierra Leone.

Ron began teaching in a one room school with one year of university training. After two years of teaching, he returned to university for a second year of study. As a well trained teacher in the 1950s, he was then appointed to his first administrative position. He has been a principal or vice-principal for over thirty years in various jurisdictions in rural Alberta and Saskatchewan. During that time, he has continued his studies and has been granted a B. Ed., a Graduate Diploma in Administration, and a M. Ed. in Administration. He has stayed in a school three to six years, on average, before moving to seek new challenges. He has been in this school for five years and wishes to remain until his planned retirement in two more years.

Upon his retirement, Ron plans to return to a smaller community where he was principal over twenty years ago. He is planning a house in the community and looks forward to pursuing his interests in gardening, reading and writing. He would like to do historical research, write, and teach in the community college located in the closest large centre.

Background of the Researcher

I was born and raised in a small village in east central Alberta. I went to school for nine years at the school in the village and attended high school in the neighbouring

town where I graduated as valedictorian of my class in 1970. I went to the University of Calgary after high school with a major of Honors Chemistry. During my first two years there, I did volunteer work in the community and took telephone crisis line training. I also became involved in student orientation programs offered by Student Programs and Services. After two years of university, I withdrew for a year and half. When I returned to university, I transferred to the Faculty of Education. I graduated in the Fall of 1976 with a Bachelor of Education with a major in General Science and a minor in Psychology.

My wife and I were married in the summer of 1975, following her graduation with a BA in English. After I graduated with my B. Ed, we worked in several rural jurisdictions. She worked as a school library clerk and then returned to university to work towards a B. Ed. I have taught a variety of grades and subjects as one does in a small rural school. Four years ago, I applied for and received a Professional Improvement Leave in order to pursue a Master's program in Educational Administration. In each of the schools I have been in, I have had a number of informal and formal administrative duties including program development and implementation, scheduling, and offering inservice workshops.

Throughout my teaching career, I have been active in the ATA and community service groups. I have held local positions of president, past president, school staff representative, ARA representative, and EPC member. At present, I am negotiating for our local and representing the local on the Edmonton Area Field Experiences Committee. In the community, I have been an active member of a service group and chaired committees for several major projects.

A Typical Day

Before School Begins

Ron Anthony generally arrives at school slightly after eight. The parking lot is partly filled as some teachers have already arrived. He greets one of the Junior High teachers and walks into the school with him. Ron's office is to the left as one enters the school and the general office is to the right. Attached to the general office is a teacher work room and the staff room.

First stop is in his office to leave his coat and to glance at his calendar and any notes which have been left on his desk. Ron then crosses the entry way and goes into the general office where the secretary is uncovering her typewriter and preparing for the day. They exchange greetings and he checks to see if there are any items in his mail box and then goes into the staff room for a cup of coffee.

The staff room is furnished with comfortable couches and one round table with four straight backed chairs. The furniture is arranged around the outside of the room with one group of small couches set around a coffee table. A large urn of coffee, started by the head caretaker when he arrived in the morning, is now ready. A number of the staff are in the room and Ron greets them. The Edmonton Oilers have just defeated their rivals in the Stanley Cup semi-finals in four games. Ron is offered a ticket to the fifth game of this series by the head caretaker. Laughing he takes it and gets a coffee and sits on the end of the couch around the coffee table.

He is facing the door and greets each staff member as they come in. Teachers come and go, to and from the workroom and their classes. Most sit down for a visit. The staff room has a friendly comfortable tone. People seem happy to see their

colleagues and are comfortable in this room with these people. The hockey game is discussed by one group of teachers and Ron, laughing, passes on the ticket.

On one side of the room, the vice-principal is discussing a conference with a teacher who recently attended it. Some curriculum materials had been presented for elementary religion classes and the teacher had been impressed. Ron overheard the conversation and asked about them, questioning if the school should send for a copy to see if they would be useful. The teacher and the vice-principal agree that this would be a good idea.

Since many of the teachers had arrived by this time, Ron announces that, starting tomorrow, teachers in Junior High will have to prepare work for their classes during French periods for the following two days. The regular teacher was going to a conference and the substitute cannot speak French.

One Junior High teacher asks what had happened about some ink which had been spilled on some floor tiles. Several others joined the discussion with comments that it must have been this student or that one. Ron comments that it has been cleaned up, but that he has been unable to determine who was responsible. The speculation continues as to who were the responsible parties. The vice-principal comments, "Now don't jump to conclusions!"

"Yes, that is it," says Ron. "You can't tell that it was her. She will obviously just deny it and she will just get the satisfaction of causing the disruption for the time that it takes to talk to her about it."

The conversation dies out as another teacher enters and asks Ron about a field trip which has been scheduled for later on that week. Ron is planning to be at a conference for Thursday and Friday, but has agreed to come back early on Friday

night. One of the supervisors cannot stay with the group for the last night of their wilderness camping trip and Ron and another teacher have agreed to fill in. He responds, "Yes, I have precise directions to that delightful and exciting camp. Yes, we will come out Friday night, providing that there is a sleeping bag for me to use as I don't own one."

Several other conversations start up. One teacher asks Ron about a family that is moving from the community. Others discuss details of the proposed camping trip. Some good natured fun is directed at Ron as he is not very interested in outdoor sports or activities other than gardening. Still others return to the discussion of the hockey series. In response to one complaint, Ron jokes about how poorly his selections in the hockey pool are doing.

Ron turns to the caretaker and asks if the security system is working and if the intercom has been repaired. A number of teachers leave the staff room and Ron gets up and checks the clock. Passing through the office, he asks the secretary to ensure that a required permission slip is brought in by a certain student. Then picking up a hand bell, he walks out into the hallway. A number of students speak to him and he responds and greets others by name. As he walks down the hallway into the elementary wing of the school, he rings the bell and stepping outside, he continues to ring the bell. To the researcher, he comments, "It is a quarter of a century since I had to use one of these. I hope we get the bells fixed today."

<u>During Periods One and Two</u>

As the principal returns to the general office, the secretary is answering the phone and the workmen are working on the intercom system. Ron again checks the items in his mailbox. One is a form from a teacher requesting support to attend a conference and one is an accident report. Carrying these, he returns to his office and

sits down at his desk. His desk has a number of piles of papers, catalogues and files on it. During the next hour, he works at his desk composing a number of notices and memos. The first is to the teachers who receive their preparation periods when their classes have French since the French teacher will be away for two days. A second notice is composed reminding the parents of Kindergarten students about Grade One registration. These are taken to the secretary. They discuss whom they should be sent home with and when. It is decided to send them home at the end of the week while Ron is at his conference.

"What about the Grade one information booklets?" asks the secretary.

""Have the Grade one teachers look at them and make any changes they suggest," said Ron. "Then have the vice-principal check it over for typos and such before you have them copied. We need to have that done before the Grade One registration."

"Fine," answered the secretary.

The teacher who coordinates physical education in the school enters and says, "Ron, you know that order for floor hockey pucks?'

"Yes."

"Well, they phoned and could not fill the order with that type but could substitute another. It would cost another $6.75. Is that all right?"

"Yes," said Ron, "just tell them to exchange it."

"There is a call for you on line one," says the secretary and Ron takes the phone from her. The public elementary school principal is calling because he has noted an error in the newspaper advertisement about the date when both systems register the

prospective students for Grade one. The newspaper seems to have run last year's advertisement without making any changes. Ron relays this news to the secretary and warns her that while the paper would print a correction, it could be too late. She should expect a lot of phone calls from parents who wonder if the school is opening for registration on a Sunday. It is also decided that posters and signs should be made and posted about the school and on the doors to inform people of the correction.

Ron reminds her to send the notice out with all the Kindergarten and Grade one students and that if the intercom is repaired, to announce it so that other students with younger brothers and sisters could also take home a copy.

Returning to his office, Ron sits down to compose another memo. This one was a notice to parents of Junior High students about a meeting to be held to discuss the human sexuality component of the health program. He takes this to the secretary and discusses when it should go home. The Grade Nine classes will be away on their camping trip and so it is decided to send it out today.

During this discussion, Ron fields another call from a reporter from the newspaper wondering about events at school for the next week. He talks about the various activities which were planned and gently teases the reporter about the error they have made with the date for the Grade One registration.

The call completed, he returns to the issue of the Junior High Parents' meeting and asks that the secretary relay a message to the parish office so that a representative could attend. Then he asks how many students are presently registered in Kindergarten and discusses how the enrollment has changed. Just before leaving the general office, he asks that the secretary try to get down to the bank and finalize a new account which was being set up so that some checks and receipts could be issued from it and the funds moved from the general school account before he left for the conference.

He passes on to the work room where he asks the school aide to make a couple of copies of an item and then returned with them to his office. On the way, he stops to speak to a student from one of the upper grades who does not seem to be where he belonged. The student mumbles a reply and Ron sends him back to his class. Walking down to the library, he comments to the researcher that this morning has been clearing up a bit of a back log and getting some things ready for when he would be away.

In the library, he gives the items that he had copied to the librarian. It is an order form for a book that he thought would be good for the school to own. He asks that if the librarian decides to order it, that she order two copies and let him know so that he can give the secretary his personal cheque for one. If she decides not to order, he will do so and had kept a copy of the order form.

Back in his office he reads and signs the teacher's request for support to attend a conference and reads the accident form. Carrying these, he returns to the general office. The accident form is incomplete and he refuses to sign blank forms. The problem is that the form said "teacher" but the incident had happened when all of the teachers were in a meeting and the aides were on supervision and so nobody was listed as being on supervision at the time. "This form needs to be redrafted," says Ron. "But that will have to wait because it is one of the superintendent's forms. It should say 'Person on Supervision' and have another line for the person who administered treatment. This form doesn't really do the job!"

"This is the form for Susan's conference," he continues. "I was thinking that it would be better if you just filed the approved forms and gave them a note that it was approved and then after they had gone to the conference, we could get them to complete the form with their expenses and so on. There always seems to be a hassle with forms

being lost." The secretary agrees and takes a new file folder out of her desk to be labeled.

Back at his office, he starts to sort the things on his desk. Some go into the garbage and some are read and put into piles. After several minutes, he takes one pile to the general office and asks that those items be filed. He takes some catalogues on to the school board office.

The Grade Nine camp organizer comes in and asks about the procedure for purchasing some plastic sheeting and twine to make the shelters at the camp. A requisition form and a purchase order are needed for each store from which things are purchased; and, prices and quantities must be filled in before requisitions are approved.

As this teacher walks out, Ron notices another one walking by and calls him in.

> "Mr. .... , could you really stress to your people the necessity to be extra careful in the new classroom. I guess that someone had a pen explode yesterday and they had to strip the wax off the floor to get the ink off. Maybe you could just remind them to be extra careful in the new facility. Thanks."

The teacher agrees and says that he will talk to his class.

Ron continues to sort out things on his desk but seems to be watching the hallway. The recess bell rings and he calls a teacher in who is walking by. He asks the researcher to step outside while he talks to the teacher who is on temporary contract. They join the staff in the staff room a short time later.

First Recess

Several Junior High teachers are discussing the schedule for final exams. As Ron comes in, he hears part of a question from the French teacher who is wondering if

she has to set exams during the scheduled time. He assures her that she is welcome to give her exam in the last of her regularly scheduled periods as she wishes. A few other questions are answered. A number of teachers move in and out of the staff room, visiting or getting a cup of coffee and then going out to the work room or back to their rooms. Recess is soon over and Ron leaves to find the workmen still working on the intercom. They manage to ring the bell and he stops to talk to the secretary.

Periods Three and Four

The secretary reports that a parent has just phoned about an incident from the week before. Two girls, from one of the Grade Three rooms, were stopped by two men in a white pickup truck who tried to get them to get in with them. They were offered a ride and then candy. This happened outside the school. The girls went home and told their mother who took them down to the RCMP. The parent did not want the girls' names mentioned, but felt that the other students should be warned about this type of thing. The secretary added that she had seen the RCMP patrolling past the school a number of times in the last few days.

Ron questions the secretary about which class the girls are in and wonders why the school had not heard about it sooner. Out loud, he considers a number of options for bringing this to the attention of the students so that they would be more careful. "We could alert the Grade Six patrollers and make an announcement, but maybe not!" said Ron. "Just a word of caution..." He left the general office and returns to his own.

Continuing to sort things on his desk, he comments to the researcher that he never seems to get to the bottom of the piles. Footsteps in the hallway cause him to look up and call in the Vice-principal. As she sits down, he says, "We had a phone call that two little girls in Grade Three in ...'s room, that two young men in a white pickup truck tried to pick them up - offered them rides and they didn't get in - offered them

candy and they still didn't get in. They went home and reported it to their parents who called the police. This happened last week, and I don't know why they just phoned the school now. Maybe we should talk to the teachers and suggest that they mention to their students that they shouldn't get into strangers' cars." The Vice-principal responded that it had been done in the fall, but was worth reminding them again. They decide to send a memo around in that it would be better not going over as an announcement even if the PA system was working. Ron agreed to draft the memo.

Ron reminds the Vice-principal that he would have to leave the school in a few minutes to attend a meeting. She jokes that she thought she could handle things. He sits down and composes a memo to the teachers, concerning the need to warn their students about strangers, which he drops off with the secretary on his way out of the school.

He comments that he is unsure about the purpose of this meeting. The local branch of AADAC have invited each school to send a representative and he feels that the school should be represented at meetings of this sort. It turns out that AADAC wishes to assist in the organization of a conference for young people where lifestyle, career and extracurricular interests could be examined and developed. Ron agrees that students and staff from his school would be interested in participating as organizers and participants. The meeting lasts almost an hour and Ron is able to return to school before lunch time. He comments that while some of the staff go home for lunch or are on supervision, many stay in the school and he still likes to spend the time in the staff room and be available to them.

Returning to the school, he stops to examine a display which some students are putting up in the entry way. He commends them on the quality of the display and the amount they have accomplished thus far. The phone rings as he comes into the main

office and he answers it since the secretary is away from her desk. He takes a message and then turns to a student who is waiting. "Are you working hard today, ... ?" he asks.

"Yes, I am," responds the student. "Mrs. ... wants a new eraser."

"Good," answers Ron and gets the eraser. The student leaves. As the secretary returns, Ron asks her if she has phoned about a student with a suspicious absence. During the conversation which follows, a teacher enters and interrupts.

"Mr. Anthony, we were discussing the medicine case for the Grade Six camp and understand that the Superintendent went through it and took out anything that might be of use in an emergency. For example, histamines and antihistamines. Can we get him to do something before we go to camp?"

They discuss the situation and conclude that permission to administer medication and a request for instructions had been part of the general letter already sent to the parents. Even though it seems to be covered, Ron says that he would draft a special letter, that afternoon, asking parents to send in specific instructions concerning any potential difficulties their children might experience if non-prescription drugs were administered at need. The teacher seems satisfied and Ron goes into lunch.

Several of the teachers go home or are involved in activities over the lunch hour. The staff room is much quieter. As the lunch break progresses, more teachers drop back into the staff room and others leave. Various conversations take place about things which are planned around the school or the community. Ron monitors several and adds comments on occasion. One teacher comes in and asks about an appointment for her formal summative evaluation. Ron asks when it would be best for her and she suggests a time. Ron agrees to this time and she leaves for the workroom. Another

teacher arranges a time to discuss a meeting which had been held by the primary division teachers.

Two teachers are discussing simulation activities they use in teaching Junior High Social Studies. They question the value of some of these. Ron adds comments about the revisions in the Social Studies curriculum and the effects these will have. The conversation continues for a few minutes.

Ron turns to the Vice-principal and says that in other years, they had taken the school secretary out for secretaries' week, but that this year they could not since he was going to be gone the rest of the week. They agreed to delay this until next week. He then turns to the caretaker who is sitting beside him and says with a smile, "I don't know if there ever is a Caretaker's Week."

After Lunch

The bells ring for the end of lunch and Ron moves to the general office. Since the intercom is fixed, he sits on a stool and waits for the second bell. While waiting, he reads the announcements and composes another. When the second bell has rung, he reads the announcements and wishes the school a good afternoon. Stopping at his mailbox, he finds that a number of items have arrived in the morning mail. These he sorts, some to the garbage, some back onto the secretary's desk and some to be taken into his office.

In the hallway, he encounters a Kindergarten class going to the Library. The first four or five walk by and look up at him and he smiles in response. Then one child says, "Hello." He stops and replies in kind and every student remaining in the line says, "Hello" as they walk by. Each student is greeted with a "Hi!" or a "Hello."

In his office, he comments that they were cute little kids. Ron sits at his desk and composes the letter about medication at the Grade Six camp. Taking the first draft in hand he goes down the hall and knocks on a classroom door.

After a called invitation, he goes in and greets the class. The teacher who had been concerned about the medication for camp comes over and Ron asks her to look over the letter he has composed. She feels it is satisfactory and he says he will have it typed and duplicated for the end of the day. With a thank you to the teacher and a pleasant word to the class, he leaves for the office where he instructs the secretary to remind him of the appointment he has made to evaluate the teacher and asks her to type, duplicate and distribute the notice he has just composed.

He then finds the Vice-principal and asks her to look over the memo he has drafted. They return to his office and she sits down to talk. The plans for the end of the year activities are discussed and the Vice-principal comments on the difficulty they have in arranging to book the community swimming pool. Ron asks about the plans which have been made by various grades. Then the phone rings and Ron answers it. After a few moments, it appears that the call will take a bit of time and the Vice-principal gets up and takes the memo to the general office to be typed.

The call was from a school on Vancouver Island. An ex-student of St. Ambrose had approached this school to see about getting permission to register in High School in the fall. She had begun her Grade Nine at Ron's school the previous fall, but had run away from her foster home several times and finally returned to her natural mother. Thus, she had not attended a great deal of the year and had done little when she was there. They discuss her case and Ron agrees to send out copies of the Grade Nine exams, when they are ready, and the other school would administer them. They

would be returned to Alberta for marking. They decide to make their decision on the basis of the results of those exams.

While Ron concludes his call, the school counsellor comes in. The three members of the staff who still smoke have been using the counselling office in the new addition for the last few weeks. It is not working out since there is no fan or other active ventilation and the smoke stays in the room. This makes it difficult for the room to be used for consultations. The counsellor asks for another solution to the smokers' dilemma. He suggests an area and Ron goes off to take a look at it. It seems as if it would be appropriate and he goes to discuss it with one of the teachers who smokes. This teacher is less enthusiastic, since he says that students would be able to see him smoking there. He does not feel that he should smoke in front of students and in fact did not do so even when away from the school with a team or on other school sponsored trips. Ron agrees and they discuss another alternative - moving the smokers back into the staff workroom off the staff room, if the flammable duplicating fluid could be more safely stored. Ron comments that this would bring the whole staff back into one area for visiting and socializing. The teacher returns to his class and Ron goes to check with the caretaker about the duplicating fluid. A metal cabinet is found and the caretaker agrees to clean it up and move it into the workroom.

Back in his office, the vice-principal and Ron resume their conversation. They discuss who will be invited to the head table of the Grade Nine graduation exercises. The vice-principal relays the outcome of an incident where two young boys had been fighting and then asks that a meeting be called for those involved with the elementary track meet. It is coming up soon and the teachers do not know what their duties are going to be. Ron doesn't respond to this request.

Ron relays the substance of the call he received earlier. The girl is sixteen and they agree that she would be best off placed in a non-academic stream in Grade Ten. She has already repeated Grade Eight and little advantage is seen in having her repeat Grade Nine as well, even though she has failed to attend for most of the year. Neither one holds out much hope for her, but are willing to help the other school if they think they can do something for the student. After a pause, Ron asks if the bike safety program is being held the next day. It is. The recess bell rings and both rise and move to the staff room.

Last Recess

As they enter, a conversation is in progress concerning one Grade nine girl. She is very concerned that her father is going to offer to chaperon the graduation dance because then she will not be able to smoke. Ron points out that the school does not allow that either. Several teachers comment about how much anger this girl seems to have inside her. Ron agrees and relays that he taught her aunt many years earlier and that she was a super person. Another teacher says that if she is worried about smoking at the dance, they should be aware of her taking cigarettes on the camping trip. Ron agrees and suggests that the supervisors check through the bags before they leave.

Various other conversations carry on. Ron makes a comment about the coffee which brings a laugh. Others begin talking about the hockey series. Ron says that his players in the staff Hockey pool seem to be the geriatric ward of the NHL as he has only four and one half points. Still others talk about their gardens. Teachers begin to get up and leave and the bell rings.

Last Two Periods

Ron rises and walks back to his office through the general office. He checks his mail box as he goes by and takes a few items with him. He begins to sort through some of the things on his desk. He comments to the researcher, that this can be a really quiet part of the day or else, all sorts of things can happen. A teacher stops in and asks if this is a good time to talk about the primary division teachers' meeting.

She sits down and relays what has happened. They had discussed a number of items but did not manage to complete their agenda. The first item concerned report cards - different Grade level teachers had wanted different items included in the report cards. They had not been able to come to any conclusions. Ron responds that, as he agreed to do, he has sent out a number of letters to see if he could get copies of report cards from various schools. As yet he has not received any useful responses. He suggests that they consider a common cover and different inserts which would reflect the wishes of the teachers in the various grades. This suggestion is well received and they go on to discuss text books. The enrollment is increasing and some new books will be required. There was no consensus as to which series should be used within a Grade or within the division. Ron responds that they have sets of at least two different authorized texts. He feels that there is no need for all classes to use the same series, and in fact that there was more reason for teachers to choose the series that they were the most satisfied in using. The meeting had not managed to get to the question of math text books but the teachers had talked about developing an annual schedule for field trips so that there would not be repeat visits to sites which had been visited by students in earlier grades. Ron commends the teacher on the amount of material that has been discussed and then reviews his understanding of the various items. She leaves and he returns to sorting papers on his desk.

The remainder of the afternoon was uneventful. Ron discusses a few things with the researcher and takes a walk around the school. The end of the day finds him back in the staff room. Two teachers approach him to talk about activities which are planned for the church. One was involved with the choir at church; and Ron and the other teacher were assisting with the service while the priest was away at a meeting. They plan how they will carry out the service. Others come in and verify when they will meet to travel together to the convention. After a final cup of coffee, Ron leaves the school to go home and finish packing for his conference.

The Principal's Actions

The actions of the principal demonstrate his beliefs. By examining his actions and his reflections on the types of items which come to him for action, one can understand what he believes about how a school should be administered. His actions have been grouped under four categories; communication, establishing and maintaining relationships, decision making, and managing change. While these categories help to organize the observations about this principal, they are not exhaustive nor mutually exclusive.

Communication

Many of the actions of the principal are best understood in terms of gathering information and communicating it to others. In his position, Ron serves as a clearing house for information. If the board has questions about the operation of the school, they are directed to Ron (RI4T1\71-73). The information is a commodity in itself and it serves as a tool used to achieve various goals and developmental purposes as well.

This section will examine some of the ways in which the principal gathered and used information.

Seeking Information

Knowing what was happening in the school was very important to the principal. Ron commented that, "I think so. That is what I think the principal's role should be - facilitating and monitoring the work of the school." (RI1T2\327-330). He agreed that knowing his staff was central to his style of administration (RI4T1\224-232). He utilized a wide range of formal and informal sources of information.

Formal Information Sources

Program information and background information about his staff were available to the principal in written form. He had access to applications and was involved with hiring of new staff as positions came available. While he had access to personnel files on existing staff, Ron rarely made use of them. Long range plans were submitted each fall by all members of the staff and many came and informed him of revisions during the course of the year such as rearranging the order in which topics were covered (RI3T3\274-292). He reviewed these plans and would use them for reference throughout the year. If a teacher required some materials, they would submit a requisition form stating the supplier, material required, quantity and cost. This provided an opportunity for them to explain what the material was to be used for and provided information about what was happening in the class.

The mail brought many things to the school and much of the mail ended up on the principal's desk. Ron would periodically sort through the materials which had collected, putting some in the garbage, some into files (Ob1T1\13-15 and Ob1N\5), some he relayed to other members of staff for their information (Ob1T1\71-72) and

some he retained and acted on. Some he would need more information about or would need to deal with at a later time. These he kept on the top of his desk (Ob3T3\110-119).

Meetings

Meetings also formed a major source of information for both Ron and members of staff. He or the vice-principal would attend most meetings or they would receive a report about the meeting. A teacher reported to him about a primary division meeting as outlined in the section "A Typical Day". During the reflective interview, I commented on the process he used in receiving this report.

> Researcher: You wrapped up the meeting. She said that she was done and you wrapped it up and reviewed some of the main points. Is that a conscious thing?
>
> Principal: Yes. I think so to make sure that we both understood what was going to happen next. I have sometimes found that I was under the impression that somebody was going to do something and they were not under the same impression with the result that it did not get done. So I always try to make sure that we both understand if there is going to be some follow-up action, what it is going to be and who is going to do it. (Ob1T1\181-192)

Ron saw meetings as a fertile source of information. As discussed in a later section on decision making, he wanted those involved with putting a decision into practice to be involved with making it. Thus teacher's views on report card formats and reading series used were reflected in the decision on these issues. Divisional or grade level meetings allowed teachers to discuss expectations and share common concerns.

> One of the things that gets discussed very frequently at these divisional meetings is level of achievement for a certain grade level, like if you get

> an A or a B. That is one of the things that is very thoroughly discussed because teachers are very conscious of that. If there are two children in the family and one is in one room and one in the other. They are very conscious if Susan got Bs and Danny got As and there didn't seem to be much difference in what they were learning. There would be questions from parents. Teachers are very conscious of the necessity of maintaining some kind of similarity of standards. (RI4Pt3T2\303-318)

One of the Grade Three classes was located away from the others. Ron felt that this could lead to a feeling of isolation and that the meetings allowed those teachers to be involved in shared planning and discussion of concerns (RI4Pt2\143-156). He also wanted to protect teachers from unproductive demands on their time.

Where he saw a meeting as being appropriate to attend he did so, but was aware that if he attended, others deferred to him (see following sections concerning delegation and committees). For those committees which he felt were discussing issues which affected the basic purposes or moral tone of the school, he would exercise his right to be an ex-officio member of the committee (RI5Pt1\81-89).

Informal Information Sources

Ron gathered a lot of information informally. When asked how he gathered this information, he stressed these sources:

> My own interactions with them. You know, you get gut feelings very quickly, especially if you have been doing this for thirty some years, you just get good feelings about some people and not so about others. I suppose that is the primary one. Also by interacting with people whom I respect. Very shortly after new people are on staff, the vice-principal and I, are exchanging notes about them and I certainly respect her judgement. (RI4T1\249-259)

He made a point of coming to the school about three quarters of an hour before class and staying at least that long after classes were over. He went to the staff room before and after school, at recesses and lunch unless he had another commitment. He commented that he felt that it was important to be available to the teachers, when they were free of other obligations, if they had questions. The staff room was a bright cheerful room with furniture arranged to encourage conversations. Most of the staff came to the staff room for coffee and joined in the conversations. The staff shared jokes and incidents from outside the school, but many school discussions also occurred.

In the staff room, there was no seating plan, either from agreement or common practice. Ron sat in various places but always tried to find a seat so that he was able to see the door (Ob2N\5). As people entered, he greeted them with a comment or, "Hello" (Ob2T1\27-40). He took an active part in conversations and monitored others around him. One lunch hour, he discussed social studies simulation activities with the Junior High teachers, the hockey game with the caretaker and some of the teachers, the funeral of a teacher's brother, a program for religious education a teacher had heard of at a conference, plans for the weekend, and several other topics. Doing so, he felt that he kept in touch with his teachers and what was happening in their lives, professionally and personally.

While working in his office, Ron often left the door open and was aware of what happened in the hallway (Ob1N\1). He would also walk around the school either on errands or when he had time available (Ob2T1\347-351;N\10). In many of these activities he seemed to be just listening in. "Yes, I never consciously set it up as a way of doing things, it just seems to be part of how I behave. But yes, I am very conscious of doing it (listening to conversations)." (RI4T1\298-301). Thus, he was able to gain a

good understanding of what was happening in the school just by watching, walking around and listening.

The Principal as a Source of Information

The researcher noted from the tone of voice used in asking questions that information was viewed as a resource to which all on staff had an equal right of access. When a teacher wanted to know when the exams were scheduled (Ob3T1\4,91-96), how to order something (Ob2T1\492-505), what an award was given for, who was on a committee or when something was happening (Ob2T1\27-35) they asked the principal. Ron was expected, by the staff, to have a better understanding of the school board policies than most of the teachers on staff. Thus, a teacher who had experienced difficulty arranging parent volunteers for a short trip came and asked Ron how much supervision was required on this type of trip (Ob3T1\300-326).

The principal or the vice-principal tried to attend all divisional meetings within the school. It has been decided that it is more efficient to have those issues which affect only part of the school discussed at smaller meetings with the teachers concerned (RI4Pt3T2\120-129). When asked what he does at these meetings, Ron responded, "Listen and answer questions. When I am there, there are an awful lot of questions. You clarify the procedure for ordering something at every single meeting." (RI4Pt3T2\160-165). Ron went on to say that he learned a great deal about what was happening from these meetings as well. He asked for input from his staff on many issues stating that, "I am not threatened by other people having ideas." (RI1T2\321) and where possible he implemented their suggestions (as with the camp medication problem outlined in "A Typical Day"). By providing answers to questions and seeking input on concerns, Ron served as a clearing house for information.

Forms and Memos

The principal was observed drafting many memos. Ron felt that it was important for him to be involved with the composition of notices which went home to parents (see Routine Items Retained by the Principal). In communication between the principal and staff, Ron sometimes also used memos. Written communication was less personal, but was also less likely to be misunderstood. One could more often ensure that all who needed the information received it.

> I have found that you have to do that because as the size increases, you simply can't rely on "It was said in the staff room" or "it was said" in various informal ways. There still is a great deal of information given out that way, but the important stuff that is going to have to be acted on, with size, you simply have to send it out in writing so that everyone did in fact get it. Because otherwise, you find that you announced it in the staff room, but then you have to remember which teachers were not there. 'Oh yes, Sophie was on supervision so I will have to go and tell her separately." and that sort of thing and so it is much more efficient and practical just to send a memo. Which is impersonal and I don't like it, but I don't really know of any other way to make sure that everybody got the information that they required to act. (RI3Pt1\34-50)

Ron was frustrated with memos and letters which seemed to have little valid purpose. He felt that the important work of the school was teaching and working with students. Issues such as counting desks and maintaining accurate inventories had been stressed in other jurisdictions where he had worked.

> When I was in the County of (Name deleted), the Superintendent spent an inordinate amount of time on the desk count, to make the desk count match the students. You always have a couple of broken ones sitting in the hall ways and you need a couple of spares. He thought that my school was always in a state of chaos because desks have numbers but I have never mastered the numbering system because I couldn't think that

> it was important. And anyway, sometimes I counted them in reverse order. I would forget whether small number meant big desks, I think that small numbers meant big desks. And little numbers meant little desks and I mean if little numbers meant big desks then big numbers meant little desks. But then when it came time to make out the report, I wouldn't know, I would forget and so sometimes I would turn the count around and it would appear that we had far too many of some sizes, our desks didn't match our students. Then there would be letters and memos to straighten this out. Like, he would know that everybody was sitting in a desk and (it was) not likely that we had our junior highs sitting in primary desks. To me it was just an exercise in stupidity. When you needed new desks I phoned up and would say that we need desks for junior highs or we need desks for elementary. I don't know if they were 12s or 13s and they never asked that where you got the desks from. But he had this all categorized out. Never in the four years that I was in (Name deleted) did the superintendent ever say anything about the general goals of education. It was always these technical management things. (RI4Pt3T2\448-500)

Ron felt that some of these concerns were not worth the administrative time being devoted to them and should be dealt with quickly in a common sense way and often by delegation to support staff. This was done in the case of the list of those who would be coming to the Grade Nine Farewell Banquet. The secretary prepared the list, he reviewed it for his own information and asked about some names which seemed to be missing (Ob3T3\257-271).

Outside the school, memos to parents and notices in the newspapers kept those concerned informed. Within the school, if he could, he walked down the hall and hand delivered or discussed an issue with those involved. Where many were involved, he called a meeting. Where all the staff was concerned or where action was required, he followed up his information with a memo, the memo ensuring that all were informed. Yet, Ron remained dissatisfied with the impersonal nature of a memo in that he

preferred to draw his staff together and to interact frequently with them to develop a good working relationship.

Establishing and Maintaining Relationships

For Ron, one of his strengths was his ability to get people to work well together. He commented that when he was hired that was one of the criteria of the Superintendent and Board. The Superintendent had contacted other Superintendents and vice-principals, with whom Ron had worked, who had, in turn, commented on this strength of Ron's (RI4Pt2T2\11-20).

Ron saw that he benefited from the good relationship with his staff. He learned a lot about them (RI4Pt3T2\264-265). This allowed him to deal with them as individuals recognizing their strengths and weaknesses.

> We don't have any cliques and we, on the whole, function very well as a group. There are some who tend to be a little malcontentish and but there are certainly no real cliques. On a staff of twenty-four teachers and when you add in secretaries and aides and caretakers and what have you, it is a staff of forty. That is quite a few people. They work together very well. (RI1T2\420-427)

He also felt that it was better for the school if the staff felt that the principal was approachable (RI4Pt3T2\278-280).

> I would like to have a rounded relationship with the teachers, not just on a 'decision maker - decision needer' basis. That is why they are quite welcome to come to my place as well. I think that you have a better relationship if you socialize together. Mostly, you have to know the people. (RI4Pt3T2\266-271)

> Quite often after parent teacher interviews or something, a good section of the staff comes over here which is quite nice. (RI1T2\452-520)

These relationships were worked on daily. Ron made an effort to be available to the staff when he was in the staff room and he kept his office door open. In the staff room, he joined in conversations freely. I observed him look up, smile and greet each person who came into the staff room in the morning (Ob2N\2). He laughed easily when he was the recipient of a ticket for a hockey game that would not be played and waited his turn to pass the ticket on to another who entered the staff room later. The ticket ended up in four or five different sets of hands over the course of the morning (Ob2T1\26-29 and Ob2\N1).

When an issue clearly affected a specific teacher or was a concern to a group, Ron sought their input before coming to a decision. The incident with medication for the Grade Six camp and the one concerning an appropriate location for the smokers on staff were both dealt with in a similar fashion. Ron listened to the concerns of the teachers and then discussed alternatives with them. Ron suggested solutions and the teachers felt secure enough that they could disagree and explain why. Ron respected the input of his staff in areas where they had special knowledge or expertise. The people responsible for the computer and physical education programs operated with a fair degree of autonomy. Ron commented that the teacher, "probably feels that he was more knowledgeable about phys. ed. activities than I am." (RI3T3\90-92). One teacher had attended a conference concerned with religious education and returned impressed with some curriculum materials which had been developed by the large urban separate school boards. Both the principal and vice-principal were interested in her comments and decided that they should order examination copies of the materials (Ob2N\3).

While these incidents are essentially concerned with decision making, the process was carried out within a relationship. These relationships were reinforced

through the social activities and informal gatherings. Within the school, hockey pools and other sports pools were organized.

Participation in Church Activities

Several members of staff were active in the church. Ron and another teacher assisted the priest as auxiliary ministers. Several acted as readers, two were involved with choirs, and some taught Sunday School (RI1T2\564-573). The degree to which a teacher was willing to be active in the church was a factor considered in hiring decisions (RI1T2\574-578).

Within the school, religious activities were held throughout the year. The school handbook listed the following in the section concerning Religion Policies. Each class started the day with a time for reflective prayer and the prayer intentions for the parish and students were included in morning announcements. A weekly mass was held on Thursday with a rotation of classes attending these weekly masses in the church. Six school-wide celebrations were held; at the beginning of the year, Thanksgiving, Advent, Lent, Holy Week, and year's end. On-going displays of religious art work and highlighting of religious aspects of regular curriculum materials was encouraged (DCM\8).

Ron commented, when asked about staff relationships, that being, "a separate school gives you a basis of community" (RI3T1\318-319). He then went on to say that when talking to students,

> (You can ask) What did Christ say about treating other people? Did he say fight with them? So it gives you a point of departure, whether they are Catholic or not, they have bought into this or they would not be in the school. At least their parents have bought into it or they would not be in the school. (RI3T1\322-330)

Activities Outside School

This staff socialized outside the school formally and informally. Ron initiated a tradition that all would come to his hotel room during Teachers' Convention and then those who wished would go out for supper (TC\Notes 1). Very few missed this event. Christmas parties and year end parties were held and well attended. One teacher drove a bus and arranged to drive a number of the staff to the mountains for a skiing weekend. Ron and several others who did not ski decided to go along for the fun of it (TC\Notes 1). Informal gatherings often occurred after the work days at the beginning of school or after parent teacher interviews.

Ron's primary concerns were that the school provide a quality education and that it operate smoothly and efficiently. He considered that staff were integral to this and worked best when they were happy. "You can't be comfortable in your work environment if you can't also be comfortable in other situations." (RI1T2\448-454). He valued the close friends he had made on staff, but worked to maintain these relationships. Teachers shared interests outside the school. Several would visit each other or go to the Legion on a Friday night (Ob1T2\530-537).

Difficulties with Staff Relations

As Ron describes, with some people these activities may distance them from the staff rather than bring them together.

> The staff has quite a number of functions together, both organized and casual. (Laughter) Once - it would have been three or four years ago. The county had messed up the school opening on us. After the first day we had- -this was under the old board which was so much better than this one- -and anyway we had this wine and cheese party for the staff. So we had this party at four o'clock and the teachers began drifting off

and finally it was just a teacher and two members of the board left and we said it was time to go home. The two members of the board announced that they were going home with me. They had obviously had to much too drink and they just announced that they were coming home with me and so I said "OK." One asked if he could phone and invite his wife. I said, "OK" and the other phoned and invited his wife as well. Anyway, the word seemed to spread as it does. Anyway, the first thing I knew we had all the board and most of the teachers came back. One of the husbands of one of the teachers began making Shooters. He simply mixed every liqueur that was available and I actually have quite a few liqueurs and he just mixed them all together. With the result that we had some very drunk people. One of the new teachers said over and over, 'The board is here! The board is here!' On one occasion someone said, 'Where is (name deleted)?' That is the wife of the fellow who was chairman of the board. They said that she just could not stand the china cabinet so she was upstairs rearranging the china cabinet. And she was up here with all of my china out and commenting on how china should be arranged. So it was quite a session. The next morning came and we didn't have kids fortunately.

Anyway a lady had come to work for us and she had come from Fort McMurray. She came highly recommended and she was a good teacher, but she was certainly no better than she thought she was. She also thought that she was highly professional (at this Party) and she didn't think that the St. A's staff were very professional and so she shut herself up in her classroom for two years, having made her decision that we were not worthy. So partying in that case was not the greatest. (RI1T2\452-520)

Thus, efforts at building relationships were not always successful. Asked how he dealt with situations of disputes between members of staff, he said he would first just monitor it and see if the people involved could work it out. He referred to a specific situation:

> Principal If it does continue, just monitor it for now, if it does continue, both people are - (Name deleted) is a very experienced, very sensible, very level-headed person so normally it won't last. And (Name Deleted) is a bit volatile. She even yelled at me once last year and spent the next three weeks apologizing so I am sure that she will get over it. I think it will pass, knowing the people. If it doesn't, we would have to do something about it.
>
> Researcher And the something would be? Have there been incidents of that nature in the past?
>
> Principal They are usually dealt with within the staff themselves, although I sometimes do get involved. Like I mean in getting ready for the Christmas concert, we had a dilly. But it . . . people just carried it totally . . . "We are telling you so that you know, but we don't want you to do anything." Well it seems to have passed, the teachers involved seem to be, getting along - maybe not best buddies but getting along. (RI2T2\240-261)

In discussing staff relations, he commented, "There are some who are a bit malcontentish." (RI1T2\422). By the end of the year, a group of primary teachers had come to feel that Junior High teachers and programs were being given priority. Ron was very concerned with the direction this was taking by the end of the year. He felt that they were "back-biting" and running down the school in the community and that their discontent was spreading to others on staff. This case seemed to be much more involved and he planned to raise the issue more openly and formally for discussion early in the following term. The situation had begun with a redeployment of staff at the beginning of the year involving class amalgamation:

> One was particularly bitter and got bitter right at the beginning. (Name deleted) got bitter at the beginning of the term when we got a teacher in the Junior High and the Grade Ones were consolidated from three classes to two. Anybody who had any sense could see that that is

> where you had to - were you going to sit down there with 17 kids in a Grade One classroom while you combined 7 and 8. It was the Superintendent's idea to have a 7 and an 8 and a combined 7/8, all over thirty students. There was a backlash and the teacher was restored to the Junior High. From there, the teacher, went around, not to me of course, bad mouthing how those Junior High teachers got this and how dare those Junior High teachers have done this. . . . But anyway, those Junior High teachers just got it again you see and the primary got it in the neck again. (RI4T1\152-207)

Since then, Ron thought that the teacher had been bitter and seeking for things about which to complain. Ron sensed what was going to happen and talked about possible implications of action and non-action:

> Since they won't listen, as I said, in the fall, I guess that we are just going to have to meet it head on and there will have to be an exercise of power because evidently reason doesn't work. I mean if they are not really stomped on, there is going to be a festering sore that will make other people on the staff angry as well. They will be demanding action while they are bitching about whatever action is being taken as being discriminatory so I don't think that they can be pleased. I will have to look at the morale of the rest of the people. If I completely destroy (Name Deleted)'s morale, she has done a very good job of destroying her own, but if I finish the job, well I guess so be it. That will be one mad person and hopefully 24 not mad ones. (RI4T1\152-207)

Ron was willing to provide staff members the freedom and opportunity to resolve disputes internally. He was also willing to mediate and try to find the middle ground where all involved could be satisfied. If these did not work, and the dispute seemed to threaten the operation of the school or the accomplishment of the purposes of the organization, then he felt he was forced to intervene more forcefully.

Relationship with the Vice-Principal

The vice-principal had been on staff and in her position before Ron was appointed. She had not applied for the principalship when it was available. Hazel had started her teaching career in Nova Scotia, married and begun a family. She became a widow and returned to teaching. After remarrying, her family moved to Alberta. She has only worked in St. Ambrose School since coming to Alberta, first as a teacher and now as vice-principal. Recently, her second husband had died and her health was now poor. She was on medical leave for eight months of the last year with the school counsellor filling in as acting vice-principal. She planned to retire after two more years (RI3T3\209-236).

Ron commented on his relationship the vice-principal.

> I think that it is a very satisfactory one. Hazel is extremely loyal. Not to me personally, I mean to the institution. She would be the perfect civil servant. She would wholly support the policy and then when the administration changed and the policy was exactly the reverse, she would be loyally supporting the new policy and doing her best to carry it out. She is just a very loyal person. She can be an original thinker too, given leeway. But she would regard - - I am sure she would say that her first obligation was to support, not to lead. And yes, we have very definite, she has very definite tasks. I think that there are two parts to the vice-principal's role. There is the part that you do jointly, so that you have someone to sound off ideas on and that sort of thing. But I think that there also has to be some sort of division so that some things she is clearly in charge of and some things I am in charge of. (RI3T3\132-150)

Ron sought her advice and shared information about things which were happening (as in the attempted abduction in "A Typical Day"). In one conversation, they discussed staffing and Ron asked her advice - a teacher was to be hired so that the

school could offer an instrumental music program next year and one teacher on staff who was replacing a lady on maternity leave was on an expiring temporary contract was on an expiring temporary contract (Ob3T2\78-95). Hazel had booked facilities for a number of classes who would be bowling and swimming for year end activities. She reported these arrangements to him and her feelings of frustration that the public schools seemed to be given priority in booking facilities (Ob3T2\39-46). She relayed to him the results of a meeting she had attended where year end awards were planned for the primary grades. Laughing, she explained that she had asked the teachers to reconsider their order for stickers:

> Vice-principal: Well, I pointed out to them that it was going to cost - if they used as many stickers as they ordered, that it would cost us over a thousand dollars. That is absolutely ridiculous.
>
> Principal: Yes. (laugh)
>
> Vice-principal: So everyone agreed that one sticker per child was sufficient. I was very diplomatic. I let them make the decision. I just got them going in the right direction. ... I think there were three thousand ordered for grades 4, 5, and 6. For 125 students. (Ob3T2\50-75)

Ron commented that the separation of duties was based on historical precedent and somewhat arbitrary delegation.

> Routine things, I just assign to her. Subs - I hate getting up and being called out of bed in the morning to start phoning, but I think she had been doing that before and I said that she should keep on with it. The awards, well I just said that I don't have any great desire to change the awards system all around and you know how it has been running and so you may as well continue to administer it. And so she took over the administration of that on that basis. It is more the things that I don't like to do. (RI3T3\243-253)

Many of the duties for which Hazel had responsibility were seen by Ron as the technical management or administration of the school. Her strength was seen as ensuring that the administrative flow of the school was easier and more efficient (RI4T1\328-340).

Ron felt that some of the teachers who had been on staff in the elementary for quite a long time preferred to talk to Hazel. Since she had always taught in elementary, they felt that she would understand them better.

> So some of the elementary teachers simply feel more confident going and talking to her. (They) feel that she will understand the problems in an elementary classroom more. Now I think if you are long there, there is a dichotomy there between the older members and the younger ones. The younger ones in the elementary who have been hired since I have been there, have no qualms about coming to me. Like, after school there you noticed it was the Grade One teacher and the Kindergarten teacher who were there about ordering supplies for Kindergarten and Grade One. If it had been one of the long standing Grade Two teachers, they would probably have gone to Hazel and thought that she would understand them better, so that is kind of an historical thing. Last year, when Wayne was the acting VP, then the elementary teachers were forced to discuss, with whom they regarded as a secondary person, elementary problems and I think they found that I could understand. (RI3T3\187-207)

The relationship between the administrators was friendly and supportive. Hazel joked with Ron about his desk and as he left for a meeting said, "(laughing) and where are you going sir?" (Ob3T1\198). They discussed issues which were coming up and concerns about members of the staff. The teacher whose temporary contract was expiring was discussed as were the year end activities and curriculum materials (Ob3T2\36-95). When Ron was uncertain about how he would handle the concern

about the attempted abduction of the Grade Three girls, he sought her advice on the issue and commented on his respect for her opinions.

Relationship with Students

Many of Ron's contacts with students were in the hallway or if they were referred to the office for misbehaviour. I observed several casual contacts with students in which he invariably treated them politely and spoke to many by name. The bells were not working at one point and he had taken a hand bell down the primary wing to ring it outside by the playground. Several children were in the hall and said hello to Ron (Ob2N\5). I was walking with him and he interrupted our conversation each time to turn and respond to the child who spoke to him. Returning from a meeting, he discovered three upper elementary students working on a display in the hallway outside the office. He stopped and commented on how much they had gotten done and how well it looked. Leaving the general office one day after lunch, he met a Kindergarten class going to the library (Ob2T1\536-538). He smiled at them and one of the braver ones said, "Hello." He responded and each of the remaining students also spoke to him and received a "Hi" or "Hello" in response. He stopped outside his office until the last child had gone by and then continued in to his desk and the task at hand (Ob2T1\536-546).

Ron dealt with some discipline problems, largely situations which developed on the playground or when students skipped or violated general school rules.

> Usually something that occurred outside the classroom. I don't get very many things that happen in the classroom, a few, -- it depends on the teacher. Usually it is things that happen outside. Like those two were people who skipped out on last Friday. Or some kids coming back from lunch or noon hour were entertaining themselves kicking over someone's fence. That sort of thing comes to me. (Ob3T2\553-561)

In a later reflective interview, Ron commented about discipline issues:

> There are classroom ones, but I try to limit it because it becomes subversion of the teachers. It really does. Then the kids are quiet when I am there, but when I leave, the teacher pays a worse price than if they had struggled through. (RI4Pt3T2\553-557)

In dealing with a student, he commented that it was very important to make sure that you had all of the facts. Students who had suspicious absences caused Ron to telephone their parents (Ob3T1\111-130). He commented on the value of his experience in this in that he felt he was less likely than some teachers to jump to conclusions and condemn a student until he was completely sure of the facts (Ob3T2\573-594).

He commented that he did not visit classes unless he had a purpose or an invitation. The two instances when he was observed visiting a classroom to speak to the teacher, he knocked on the door, entered upon invitation, spoke to the class and then asked to speak to the teacher.

When asked what he saw as the position of students in the school and his relationship, he commented,

> The main reason that schools exist is to serve students, so that they are the most important. I think that you do have to keep telling yourself that, because it is very easy to detach the administrative questions from the students. It is very easy to get interested in counting the number of books that you have and forgetting that a book should represent a student. The idea is not to have a nice and neat library, the idea is to have a library that serves the needs of kids. So obviously they are the most important purpose there, but it has to be child centred without being child controlled.

> I certainly listen to students. There isn't the formal structure now that I had in the past, because partly if you delegate the advisorship of the student's council, then somebody else is dealing directly with the student council. But kids do just drop into my office just to talk and I certainly do listen to students. That doesn't mean that I am going to necessarily do what they want because that may not be best for them. (RI4Pt3T2\484-510)

Ron knew most of the students by name and family, especially those who were involved to some degree in the church (RI4Pt3T2\653-663). He commented that the community was large enough to give a sense of anonymity. He missed the close relationships he had enjoyed while working in much smaller communities. He said that where parents know him outside the school and he has visited their homes, they are more confident about phoning up when they have a concern. Also, they know that you care about their children and trust you to do what you feel is best (RI4Pt3T2\632-663).

Ron treated students as individuals with unique needs and situations. He individualized his treatment of them just as he dealt with his staff as individuals. He arranged to send exams to Port Alberni for one student, even though he had limited hope of success for this student (Ob2T1\607-636). This story tells how one special needs child benefited from his willingness to make special provision for the needs of one student:

> There is that little guy who wandered around with me, had his desk in my office for a while. He was there because of the resource room teacher. She was very dedicated, but too idealistic -- in an impractical way. Like you want to be idealistic, but you have to do that with pragmatism. When the kid comes from the most disorganized family situation that I could conceive of, he is not going to make much progress in resource room and if you have to adjust from the regular routine, then fine. Well anyway, she wanted to kick him out until he was sent to a psychologist and you were not going to get his parents to

send him anywhere. Putting him out on the street was not going to do any good. Anyway, she just couldn't handle him and so he had to get moved to my office.

Actually I think that he learned something. Because even the few minutes that I would have now and again to try to teach him something, but he really tried for me. He pathetically wanted to please me so we were getting along ok. Well (Teacher - Name deleted) would make very derogatory comments about (Student - Name deleted) and I finally had to tell her,'(Teacher), of all the people in the school who are deserving of Christian compassion, it is (Student) and if he is in your room next year, He will be treated with compassion." (RI4Pt2T2\52-87)

Meeting the needs of the students was very basic to Ron's view of the school and how it should run. He demonstrated his beliefs through his actions and was willing to speak his beliefs if he felt the need existed. Ron treated students as if they were adults and showed it by being polite to them and recognizing them when they spoke to him. The children responded positively. Some broke the school rules and were disciplined as individuals. The majority responded to Ron in a friendly, respectful manner and were not afraid of him.

Managing Change

One of the ways Ron talked about administering his school was "managing change". He saw that change should be for improvement of the school and said that he, "really opposed change just for the sake of change" (RI4Pt2\722-723). Changes put demands on the staff and students and he said that the administration should act to protect both from unreasonable or unjustifiable expectations, changes should be for improvement and also should be clearly thought out in advance (RI4Pt2\725-731). He viewed the management of change to be one of the most difficult aspects of his work in the school.

> That is the biggest problem, always, people don't want to change. "We have always done it this way," they say. "Why are you suggesting that we do it differently? The Accident forms have always been pink, why are they suddenly blue?" That we ran out of pink paper is not a good enough reason to some people. "Pink is accident paper. Order paper is green and don't confuse me." (Ob2T1\120-129)

Nonetheless, he strived for improvement:

> You try to make a conscious effort at the school not to just maintain. That is one of the reasons that I have moved quite a lot in the past. You get to that stage where the school is mine and suggestions for change are almost a personal attack because this is my system. But I try not to do that. I try to still be a little bit visionary. But having - - it is always a two way street - - you can't be a visionary very long if everyone around you is a negative. But when you have keen, enthusiastic and sensibly idealistic people around, it is a lovely feeling for you. And there definitely are many of those on our staff. (RI4Pt2\463-477)

Ron sought improvement in the way the school operated and in how teachers did their work. The first was a desire to have the school operate more efficiently and the second involved improvement of instruction and professional growth.

Smooth and Efficient Operations

Ron believed that the day to day operation of the school should be as smooth as possible. When asked to reflect on the day to day activities, Ron commented that he did not see it as his role to do many of those day to day tasks, but that he should monitor them and see that they were done. The responsibility for the operation was his, and he said, "The place has to run. It is the principal's responsibility to see that it runs." (RI2T2\132-133). When he noted a procedure or form that was not as efficient

as it could be, then he would step in to try to change it (RI4T1\379-399). This had already occurred in the case of the procedure for authorizing financial expenditures:

> There has been an effort in the last two years, to tighten them (financial procedures) up because money has gotten more tight. When I first came, things were extremely lax in that regard. Because the secretary/treasurer and the board were just not concerned about the financial things and there was just lots of money. Well the money started tightening down and (Name deleted) is trained and has done a lot of that kind of work. Well she was appalled by the lack of system and we have generally tried to tighten this up. (RI5T1\431-447)

While the procedure had been changed to provide greater fiscal responsibility, not all staff had clearly understood the new procedure. One teacher who was responsible for the physical education program, and thus would have done more purchasing than some other teachers, came to check the procedure twice for purchasing some twine and plastic for the Grade Nine camp (Ob2T1\492-501; Ob2T2\165-172).

Ron was experiencing frustration with the two of the forms used in the school; the accident form and the form teachers use to apply for conference support. The forms and procedures for using them did not seem to be accomplishing their purpose. In Ron's words, a good form or procedure is one which, "carries out the purpose for which it exists" (RI4Pt3\109).

The conference form which teachers fill out goes first to Ron for initial approval, then to the vice-principal if a substitute is required and then back to the teacher. After attending the conference, the teacher is to resubmit the form with a claim for expenses. This procedure was not working as forms were lost or misplaced and people were not receiving support which they deserved. Then they had to redo the form and back date it. Ron said, "Maybe if somebody was told that if you don't do this right, we are not going to pay you, maybe that would smarten them up, but I wouldn't

be willing to do that." (RI5T1\464-467). Ron saw that this would reduce the incentive to attend conferences and inservices and would end up being counter productive (Ob1T1\17-32; RI1\21-43; RI5T1\468-470). It was decided that for the interim, the form would be kept on file in the office until after the conference and then the teacher would be asked to submit an expense claim.

An accident report form was submitted during a time when the teachers were in a meeting and aides were on supervision. Since the form asked for "teacher on supervision" and not for "person in charge" or "who administered first aid", no names of adults involved with the incident were recorded and no information was given about any action taken or first aid administered. The form was close to being blank and Ron refused to sign it. The superintendent had designed this form and the principal resolved to attempt to have this form redrafted into a more useful format (Ob2T2\368-400).

The procedure for requisitioning supplies is discussed under financial questions. While it appears to be straight forward enough, the principal reported, "You clarify the procedure for ordering something at every single meeting!" (RI4Pt3\164-165). This frustration with the lack of efficiency of these forms and procedures led to a decision by the principal and vice-principal to spend the last weeks of July and August constructing a procedural handbook for the teachers (RI4T3\102-106). Considering Ron's willingness to answer questions and explain procedures repeatedly, I wonder if this will be a misplaced effort. Teachers may simply file the handbook away and continue asking him how things are done feeling that it is easier to ask than to look up the procedure. Nonetheless, the plan is indicative of his desire to make the operation of the school even more smooth and efficient.

Working with Teachers

Beyond the efficiency and smooth operation of the organization, Ron saw that he could affect the school through his efforts with the teachers:

> Actually at this level, maybe if I can, by setting the tone and working with the teachers, I make more of an impact than in the old days when I worked much more directly with a class of kids. Now hopefully, my contribution might even be more profound if I can do something to improve the teaching. (RI4T1\450-456).

He sought to improve the teaching in a variety of low key ways (RI4Pt2T3\37-38): suggesting conferences they might attend, discussing teaching strategies (Ob3T2\495-505), suggesting techniques, and providing resources (RI4T2\118-130). He noted that many teachers wanted to improve their teaching:

> They will even come, often you don't have to approach them, they will come and say, "Have you got any ideas?" And you give them whatever ideas that you can and that sort of thing. Or you find somebody that you know is having trouble with something, you just take them a book with some more exercises in it or what ever and say, "Can you use this?" Those that are not amenable to change, all you can do is to break it down into tiny, tiny little things so that at least you try to get one thing changed. But if you confront them with a whole list, then nothing is going to get done. They will just get their backs up and get defensive. (RI4T2\118-130)

In addition to the things Ron did directly in an educational leadership role, he also recognized that others could and did fill this role. One of the Grade One teachers was seen by Ron as very dynamic and others looked to her for ideas and ways they could improve as is described below:

> We have this one dynamic young lady who leads people. She leads people by example by being a very skilful and dynamic teacher. She does not push her weight around, but pretty soon everyone is just wanting to do the same things that she is doing. (RI4Pt3T2\207-235)

He went on to explain how this teacher was going to work with a new reading series:

> Since Sandy is so dynamic, the other teachers are going to borrow some books from her and in about three years, we will be solid Networks in Grade 1 because of Sandy's influence. (RI4Pt3T2\207-235)

Staff members have responsibilities in the school beyond their classroom and Ron sought to help them grow in their confidence and ability to do new and different things. These duties were reviewed at the beginning of the year and teachers were asked to indicate the areas in which they were interested. Ron indicated that:

> Hazel and I strike the committees based on their (the teacher's) preferences. It is a combination of democracy and railroading. I have sometimes called people in and asked, "Wouldn't you really like to work on this committee?" and then they are often willing to volunteer. (RI5T1\102-114)

He felt that he knew his staff well and sometimes had confidence that they could do something well before they were willing to risk it. If he could indicate that he had confidence in a person, he had found that that person would be willing to try something new and grow in the process. He went on to say that he had found that success often underlies a person's self confidence. (RI5T1\498-507).

When a teacher had attended a conference, both the principal and the vice-principal made an effort to sit down and discuss what they had learned from the experience and where they could suggest things for St. Ambrose(Ob3T2\495-505;

RI4T1708-721). Ron demonstrated the value he placed on professional development by attending conferences himself and ensuring that teachers received financial support even when the forms were lost or incorrectly processed (RI1T1\21-43).

Ron was unwilling to support change for the sake of change (RI4\722-731) but felt that encouragement of teacher growth and change was a major role for a principal. He encouraged his staff to develop new programs and pursue interests where they could provide rational justification for their efforts (Ob1T1\148-191).

Decision Making

Part of the actions of the principal involved making decisions. He commented on the need to understand the circumstances of the situation when making a decision, "I am a great believer in just plain common sense. It was a rule and so we did something which was, in the circumstances, just ridiculous. That just irritates me." (RI5T1\615-618). He was asked to resolve a concern about a place for the smokers on staff (Ob3T2\153-174); to provide a way of resolving a dilemma between the Superintendent's view of policy and a teacher's perceived need for first aid materials and simple medications (Ob3T1\132-137); what to do about an attempted abduction several days previously(Ob2T1401-414); and, if he wanted some expired hockey game tickets (Ob2N\2). While decision making was an important part of his work, it was not the only thing that he did. Many decisions were made by others on the staff, by committees or by the principal in consultation with others.

Staff Decision Making

Ron sought to involve his staff fully in the work of the school and saw that they should therefore be involved in making many decisions.

> I always thought as a general rule, the decision should be made as close to the action as possible. So I think that the decisions that can be made by the teacher should be made by the teacher. Those which can be made by the principal should be and so on up. (RI1T2\346-350)

By "as close to the action as possible", Ron recognized both that certain decisions benefited from specialized knowledge held by others and that people other than the administration were involved in the implementation of a decision. Ron delegated certain aspects of the operation of the school to those who knew more about it, as in the physical education program. He stated that, "to some people in a position of authority, having someone else make some of the decisions seems to them almost a threat to their position....Well, I don't feel threatened by somebody else having ideas" (RI1T2\315-322). Ron sought out and considered the opinions and special knowledge of others on staff. When the teacher reported on the primary division meeting, he asked her opinion on the need for all grades or classes to have the same series of textbooks and categories of comments on the report card (Ob1T1\106-128). He asked for input from two teachers who were concerned with the issue of a place for the smokers; the counsellor whose office was being used and found it was not working and one of the few remaining smokers on staff. It would seem that the non-smokers also had a stake in this issue, but he was not observed discussing this with them. He commented that the issue had been around for awhile and that other alternatives had been tried (RI3T3\62-67).

As he talked to teachers with a stake in an issue, he asked what they thought and listened actively and carefully. Ron would ask questions and seek suggestions. He would offer suggestions and was willing to consider arguments they raised both for or against his suggestions. Through eye contact, questioning, and checking for understanding, Ron showed that he listened to and considered the contributions of

these people (Ob1T1\106-128 and Ob1N\2-3). They responded, in large measure, in a reciprocal fashion. The teacher reporting the divisional meeting leaned forward, maintained eye contact, and discussed the issues in an animated voice (Ob1T1\106-128 and Ob1N\2-3). The teacher who smoked was comfortable in pointing out a concern he had with the first suggestion Ron had made of a place for the smokers to go (A Typical Day -After Lunch, Ob3T1\370-391).

Ownership of Decisions

At the end of the meeting on the primary divisional meeting, Ron reviewed what had been discussed and decided, with the liaison teacher. When asked to comment on this, he pointed out the importance of clear understanding. For him, understanding and involvement in the process led to a sense of ownership in the decision and ensured its implementation:

> I have sometimes found that I was under the impression that somebody was going to do something and they were not under the same impression with the result that it did not get done. So I always try to make sure that we both understood, if there was going to be some follow-up action, what it is going to be and who is going to do it.(RI1T2\184-192)

He talks of this sense of ownership as follows:

> We have a very strong staff. People are much happier if they have ownership in what they are doing. Like, I leave the organization of the phys. ed. virtually totally to (Name deleted). I am sure that he is much happier doing that than being told what to do, especially when he would probably feel that he was more knowledgeable about phys. ed. activities than I am. (RI3T2\79-92)

The divisional meetings were another aspect of this. When asked why these meetings were held, Ron gave three reasons. First, that all teachers should feel they

had equal access to the administrators so that they could make their views known (RI4T2\126-129). Second, that issues were considered by those affected by them and this did not waste other people's time (RI4T2\120-123). A third benefit was that it solved the problems of isolation that occurred when teachers from one Grade were spread around the school. He said these meetings provided a formal structure for bringing them together with others who shared their concerns (RI4T2\143-156).

The work of the school was done in large measure by others on staff. Ron said that his role was to facilitate and monitor their work. The vice-principal and Ron scheduled and coordinated activities, arranged for the use of community facilities and booked buses for field trips. The planning of the activities was done by classroom teachers or committees. Ron felt that his role was to be supportive while still providing the freedom to his staff to pursue their interests (RI3T3\99-111).

Tied to giving of responsibility for projects was an expectation that certain members of staff were going to be successful in projects they initiated. Ron talked about the trust he had in two members of his staff:

> Trust develops and (Name deleted) and (Name deleted) have certainly never let me down on anything that they said they were going to do. They did it. They carried through. They thought it through before they asked so they weren't asking and then finding out that they ran into a lot of problems. They had thought it through and so they knew about the problems. So it does make a difference who asks, but I would hope for a positive reason and not for a negative one. (RI4T2Pt3\385-394)

He had earlier commented on the ambition that these people had and how they brought forward ideas and wanted to organize things. One always organized the Grade Nine camp and had organized a trip to Europe. Ron said,

> He wants to do things, not in order to show that he is a great fellow. Just he is somebody who has ideas and wants to carry them out. . . . It is very good (for the school) that he does, but he also enjoys doing it. So naturally, he gets special attention by being the person who is coming forward with ideas. We also have people who are more passive and will wait to be told that we are going to do this. Then they will do it quite efficiently but they would never come up with the idea on their own. (RI3T3\101-118)

Mistakes

If you are going to make decisions or allow other to make them, then in hindsight some of them will seem to be poorly considered. Ron had a great deal of faith in his staff, "After all, these are professional people you are dealing with." (RI1T2\329-331). He would intervene when he felt that the issue affected the basic purposes of the school or the moral tone of the school. These he felt were more important and that he should be involved with them (RI5T1\66-72). Yet, he felt that after more than thirty years of experience, he had seen a number of ways of dealing with given situations and most of them worked. Ron believed that most people tried to make the best decisions they could at the time. Hindsight was most useful in helping one make better decisions in the future. Intervention on the other hand could cause a person to be unwilling to risk or take on a responsibility.

Everything that was decided or organized did not have to be the very best possible. If people tried their best, they would be given the opportunity to try and support for being willing to try and learn from their experience. In the following quote, the vice-principal is worried that the track meet committee has not met. Ron listens to her concerns and agrees with them but does not suggest doing anything about them.

> Vice-principal I think that we will have to get the elementary track committee together. Yesterday, I don't think they ever did meet. The

rest of us want to know what we are to do and how we are to run things. Also, we want to discuss whether they want the canteen open and so on.

Principal Right, Right.

Vice-principal So, I don't know when will be the best time to get together. I would like to say at 8:15 in the morning, but I don't know if we could be sure of getting everybody here. At recess morning?

Principal Yea, that should be OK.

Vice-principal Because it is going to be Friday morning and . . .

Principal Nobody will know what they are doing.

Vice-principal (Name deleted) says that there are three beginners doing it. But that is all the more reason why we should get together so that at least they will get some more guidance. Anyway, I am going to go and call the pool and see if we can have a Pool party the last week of school. (Ob3T1\590-606)

Later, when asked to reflect on this incident, Ron commented:

Well yes, if it is somebody else's responsibility, they should do it and they should do it without my presence. It doesn't matter how much you try to fade into the woodwork, if I am there, I am the leader of the activity. They would turn to me and say, what do you think and often that becomes the decision and it doesn't need to be. Now if it is something that I think affects the - - well my ideals, the tone of the school, well then I think that I should be there. But I can't see that whether they allow two jumps or four jumps at the high jump pit, really affects the moral tone of the school and so somebody else should make the decision. . . . This is what this committee is supposed to do, make these kinds of decisions. (RI5T1\64-84)

Where he was not at all forgiving was with those who were not willing to learn. He condemned some teachers by saying they had, "one year of experience, twenty-five times." (RI1T2\335-336).

Financial Questions

All purchase orders came through Ron's hands. He commented that this provided him with a fertile source of information about what was happening in the school. It also allowed him to maintain budget balances in the various areas. While it was a form of control, Ron stated that the purpose was more to ensure accountability. This procedure had been changed over the last two years and was still a source of confusion.

Money spent for supplies in this system was controlled by a system of requisitions and purchase orders. All purchases require prior approval via the principal's signature on a requisition. Requisitions were to be presented in a reasonably complete form, with the name of the supplier, quantity of materials being purchased and the price. The caretaker or the secretary made purchases locally or the teacher could do so themselves. Purchase orders from out of town suppliers were normally sent through the mail. The day to day purchases of small amounts of supplies were approved almost in an automatic fashion as long as the proper information was supplied on the requisition. Presentation of a complete requisition form allowed the principal to enquire as to the use the teacher planned to make of the materials.

The principal saw that this system as having number of advantages. Since he attended the School Board meetings, if there were any questions from members of the board, he would be in a position to answer them (RI4Pt1\71-75). It was important that someone kept track of what still may be spent from the budget. The

Secretary/Treasurer kept figures which represented funds dispersed rather than orders placed and used less specific account categories. For example, the supplies budget includes amounts allocated to various program areas within the school, but was treated as one account in the Board office (RI3T2\110-120). Teachers had the freedom to plan their programs with the knowledge that funds are available. The principal, to a large degree uses the control of funding to gather information about the programs which the teachers are interested in running, the reasons why these are wanted and the expected benefits (RI3T2\147-156).

The principal commented that, in effect this system gave him a great deal of power:

> Actually, without intending it, really this gives you a tremendous amount of power because everyone has to seek my approval for everything. Knowledge is power. I know how much money is available and I know if somebody can spend $150 for whatever they are asking.(RI3\120-126)

This comment about power would seem to be a contradiction when considered in terms of this principal's desire to put decisions in the hands of his staff. From the researcher's observations of teachers bringing requisitions forward, it appeared that they expected a positive response to their request once the paper work was correctly completed (Ob2N\6,13, Ob3N\2). When questioned about this in a reflective interview the principal agreed in a soft voice. The principal stated that he, "does not see a need to demonstrate his power by denying requests" (RI4\57-61). The expectation that approval would be granted to all reasonable requests in effect transferred the power of approval to the teachers (RI3T2\163-170).

This is not a complete transfer of fiscal responsibility in that some requests were denied (RI4T2\199-206). Requests which came in an incomplete form were sent back

(Ob2T2\165-171) and with ones which were large, the teacher might be asked to set priorities or spread them over two or three years (RI3T2\174-182).

At the year end, planning was conducted to get ready for the coming year. One aspect of this was the ordering of text books. The issue was first raised during a report from a primary division teachers meeting in mid April (Ob1T1\129-186). At this time, the principal encouraged flexibility in choosing the class sets which would be required, one set for Grade One and one for Grade Two. He saw no sound reason for insisting that all teachers in a grade use the same series or continue the series which were in use. One request by a Grade Two teacher for the purchase of a new series was denied. The teacher's rationale was that she had been using her present series for six years. Although lack of funds in the budget was offered as a reason, the principal confided that he felt that being tired of the series was not a sufficient reason for that expenditure (RI4Pt3\199-206).

> I didn't accept an order from a Grade Two teacher who wanted a new series of readers just because she had had that one for six years. In a way, you could say that that was a justifiable reason for a change. Maybe she was lacking in enthusiasm for the series after having gone through it six times. But I did not think that that was sufficient weight to justify the expense of $1500 for new readers. (RI4T1\741-749)

Thus in his view, only expenditures for which there were educational reasons, which he deemed valid and funds available would be approved.

Part of the credibility of a request depended on who was making the request. The principal identified some teachers as having a history of initiating projects and carrying them out with success. He expected future proposals to be presented with consideration of the ways and means and some of the background research complete and expected that he would respond favourably. At least one teacher on staff was

viewed by the principal as being very insecure. The reasons which this teacher offered in support of a request were more likely to be doubted (RI4Pt3\369-377).

In spite of this earned credibility, some teachers believed that Junior High teachers and programs were more likely to receive favourable responses to requests and that Primary Division teachers and requests suffered as a result. This was a source of frustration for the principal who felt he had gone to great lengths to explain that this was not the case (RI4Pt2\152-160). Nonetheless, a small group of teachers were dissatisfied and this had a negative effect on their commitment to the school and their performance (RI4Pt2\160-190). The principal saw that this dissatisfaction had roots in addition to fiscal arrangements, but the handling of fiscal requests was interpreted as being unfair by this vocal group. Part of the dissatisfied group had obtained or was seeking employment elsewhere. The principal planned to address his perception of the causes of the dissatisfaction at the beginning of the coming term (RI4Pt2\190-207). This situation demonstrates the implications for staff morale and on other aspects of the organization's functioning that perceptions of inequity in handling the finances can have.

Fiscal management in this school generally proceeded routinely but there were some difficulties. Since all expenditures require the principal's approval even minor expenditures came to him for approval. When an order for floor hockey pucks could not be filled with the original materials, the upgraded materials at an additional cost of $6.75 and the change in cost was presented for approval (Ob2T2\197-204). The problem of delegating the petty cash items and minor cost overruns was that the principal's access to this source of information about what is happening in the school would be limited.

Routine Items

Many administrative tasks occur repeatedly or are amenable to treatment by established procedures. These routine items are dealt with using procedures and forms and by delegation. Other than approval of purchase orders, this principal does not directly deal with this type of item. The principal contends that as the highest paid person on staff, he should not be dealing with routine items which the secretary could handle at lower cost (RI4\401-411). In an honest fashion, the principal admits that he assigns to others those routine things which he does not like to do (RI3T2\252-253). Largely he assumes a monitoring role, ensuring that these tasks are dealt with.

Standard Operating Procedures and Forms

Purchase orders, accident reports, requests for leave and support to attend conferences and similar items are dealt with using forms. Announcements were written out in advance in a notebook kept in the office on top of the Public Address system (Ob2T1\49-53). Supplies were obtained through the general office and photocopying was done by a school aide (RI2T1\22-24). Inventory control of supplies and reordering as needed were the responsibilities of the secretary and aide. The order would go to Ron for approval. Special events were recorded on a large calendar in the staff room and on calendars maintained by both the secretary and principal (Ob3T1\67). Staff rotated supervision duties according to a schedule.

Many forms pass through the principal's hands for approval and this allowed him to monitor and gather information about the school. In this position, he is able to consider the degree to which the form or procedure fulfils its stated purpose. He has concerns about a number of them, especially the accident report form and the

conference support request form and procedure. These were discussed in the section headed "Managing Change".

The procedure for requisitioning supplies is discussed under financial questions. While it appears to be straight forward enough, the principal reports, "You clarify the procedure for ordering something at every single meeting!" (RI4Pt3\164-165). This frustration with the lack of efficiency of these forms and procedures led to a decision by the principal and vice-principal to spend the last weeks of July and August, 1988, constructing a procedural handbook for the teachers (RI4T3\102-106).

Delegation

This school had a full time caretaker during the day, a full time secretary, an aide in the photocopying room and a half time vice-principal. Each of these was responsible for a variety of tasks. The secretary and aides dealt with classroom supplies such as chalk and paper. If a teacher requested something from the principal which was another's responsibility, he generally directed them to the appropriate person (RI3\167-175). Special requests for supplies were brought to the principal via purchase orders and requisitions.

The vice-principal was in charge of securing substitutes whenever a teacher was absent, awards programs, the ordering and scheduling of standardized tests (RI3\243-247), and booking arrangements for community facilities like the swimming pool (Ob3T1\660-681). Ron commented that Hazel was a very competent administrator (RI4T1\330-331) who managed the many routine duties efficiently. She had been responsible for these duties with previous principals and continued after Ron was appointed (RI3T1\241-255). Other members of staff had responsibility for things such as the Junior High Students Council and the Physical Education program and equipment (RI3T2\81-92).

Early in every year, the duties of each person in a support role was reviewed and discussed with that person. This served to clarify expectations and responsibilities. Support staff reviews were more frequent. The present Head Caretaker is very good and had earned Ron's respect, "Sylvester is a gem. He has earned it (Ron's respect). I believe you earn credibility - you start out with a certain basic level, but you can earn more or lose it." (RI5T1\172-176) With support staff, failure to fulfil these expectations has resulted in the dismissal of a temporary secretary and a Head Caretaker (RI2T2\44-122). On the last day of school, the secretary left early leaving a number of items incomplete much to Ron's annoyance and he was considering her dismissal (RI5T1\192-199).

Committees

Certain annual events were organized by committees. The annual track meet was organized by a group of teachers who were new to the task this year (Ob3T1\590-606). The Grade Nine camp (Ob2T1\60-66) and "Farewell Banquet and Dance" were also the responsibilities of committees (Ob3T3\219-243). The Grade Six classes went to a camp at Sylvan Lake. This activity was organized by a group of teachers (RI3T2\81-92).

Extra duties were delegated following the first staff meeting of the year. A list was circulated asking people to indicate the areas of the school program, activities, and committees which they would be interested in providing help. The principal and vice-principal then reviewed these and made the final assignments (RI5T1\93-100).

Committees tended to operate with a fair degree of autonomy. Ron was concerned with the effects of intervention in the working of the committee. While monitoring what was or was not being done, he tried to leave the committee free to

work and commented that his presence affected the leadership and decisions made in the group.

Routine Items Dealt with by The Principal

Ron retained certain routine items as his own responsibility. All forms came through his hands for authorization or for his information (Ob2T2\165-172). He also composed most notices to parents such as the notices about Grade One registration sent home with students in Kindergarten and published in the newspaper (Ob2T2\240-273). Teachers composed notices to the parents about events in their own classes and sent these out without any administrative authorization (Ob3T1\298-325). As well, Ron authorized the spending of school funds and acted as the official representative of the school as required.

The school was asked to send a representative to a meeting organized by AADAC to discuss a conference they wished to organize for young people in the community. Ron attended this and commented that he felt it was important that the school be represented at that type of meeting (Ob3N\3 ,RI5\674-678). When questioned about celebrations and major events in the school year, Ron commented that, "...the major ones in classes, they always invite me. Like if they are having a party or presentations, then we (Vice-principal and principal) are usually invited" (Ob3T3\250-254). He choose when he would be involved with the planning and organization of the event, but would, if asked and available, usually fulfil the ceremonial role.

Non Routine Items

In the course of each day, a number of situations developed or telephone calls were received which required action. Rather than delegating them, many of these items

were dealt with by the principal as they arose. He had teaching responsibilities for only one period a day and so he was most often the person who was available to answer questions or to talk to someone on the phone. Forms brought to the office were hand delivered to the appropriate person (Ob2T1\151-154) and telephone calls were answered. When the request was clearly the responsibility of another, it was referred, but in many cases the principal found it easier to deal with it quickly and personally. Ron commented:

> That is deliberate. I have known and from the way that other principals talk, I think that some of them get all wound up in some of that sort of thing. Which are really insignificant and you can't do anything other than what comes up as being common sense. (RI5T1\569-574)

In the call from a British Columbia school concerning a student placement, Ron and the British Columbia principal decided to forward exams for the student to complete. He felt torn between what he termed "...exercise in futility" (Ob3T2\633) and the hope that the British Columbia School could accommodate the student.

The principal of the public elementary school called to ask Ron about the dates on which both schools would be registering potential Grade One students. It appeared that the that the newspaper had made an error and printed last year's advertisement without change. Shortly after this, the newspaper called for information for their listing of community events in which events in the school were listed. Both of these could have been handled by the secretary, but Ron looked after them.

"Mr. Anthony!" Items

As principal of the school, Ron was occasionally asked to act in his official capacity as principal. In each of these cases, the member of staff approached Ron and called him, "Mr. Anthony" (Ob3T1\132). At all other times he was referred to as

"Ron". The caretaker approached Ron at one point because the metal screens from the bottom of the urinals had gone missing (Ob1\Notes 2). One of the organizers of the Grade Six Camp was concerned to find that the Superintendent had removed all medications from the First Aid Kit (Ob3T1\132-176). In each of these cases, the people were clearly upset and seeking support. Ron listened carefully and questioned them for clarification. Then he suggested a solution to them. In each case, they felt that the problem was such that they had no right to act to resolve it. The caretaker did not feel that he had any authority to discipline students or to seek those who had caused the problem. The teacher was unhappy but unwilling to challenge an action of the Superintendent. Ron sought the common sense solution and to project a sense that he supported his staff. He drafted the letter to the parents and later that day, took it down to the camp organizer to have her review it before it was typed, copied and distributed (Ob3T1\244-245).

Setting His Own Agenda

The principal to a large degree set his own agenda. If responsibility for something had been delegated, Ron tried to allow the person or committee the freedom from interference to do their job. While he monitored what was being done, he also felt that he worked with a competent group of people who understood what was expected of them and would do it (Ob3T3\75-85). He deliberately avoided interfering:

> I think that you have to do that. If you are willing to delegate things then it is delegated and you have to let people make mistakes. If it is a drastic mistake then you would have to do something. But generally it doesn't really matter which way you do it, just so long as there is a decision made and it will be done.(Ob3T2\53-61)

This allowed him the freedom and opportunity to do those things he choose to do. These included things he had a personal interest in, those which he felt directly

impacted on the basic purposes of the school and those which he felt would improve the school or enhance its operations. Ron also felt that not being lost in the confusion of dealing with a myriad of small items gave him a perspective on what was happening in the whole organization. "That is deliberate," Ron said, "I have known and from the way that other principals talk, I think that some of them get all wound up in that sort of thing and lose sight of what they are trying to do." (RI5T2\569-573).

Importance of Different Issues

The researcher commented to Ron that as he walked through the school, there was a real sense of calmness and purpose about the school. Students were observed working on projects and groups of younger students were observed reading. Everyone seemed active and busy (RI3T3\257-265). He responded, "It is always nice when people tell you that what you would hope was happening is in fact happening. I would hope that that was meeting our objective of being purpose directed -- not just random activity, but purpose directed." (RI3T3\266-270). On another occasion, he commented that, "Actions without purpose becomes licence." (RI5T1\478) When asked if he saw the major priority in the school to be the educational program, he commented that he thought the priority was providing education in a Christian moral setting (RI5T1\260-264). The educational program was stressed, but it was not the only purpose for the organization and he did not feel that the educational purpose could be separated from the moral one.

Ron felt that some issues must be viewed in a different way in a separate school than they would be in a public school. When asked to comment on the difference in how he talked about finding a place for the smokers and the group of dissatisfied teachers who had been down on the school, he said:

It is in sort of a different category. Ok that one (smoking) is a case of people having to work together even with people who have certain characteristics or habits that you don't approve of. But there is no right or wrong there in any kind of moral sense. It is only better or worse. It is better because it makes more people happy, not because it advances the moral principles of humanity. But when we come to this back biting and back stabbing and that sort of thing, then we are into a different realm. We are into a right and wrong issue. In a public school, you still look at it sort of in the same way as the smoking thing. Back biting and that is bad because it disrupts staff morale. It is not conducive to bettering education and a good collegial atmosphere. In a Catholic School it is wrong because it is wrong. This is what you go to purgatory for, in case these people have forgotten. They should have to go to confession and confess that because it is wrong, morally wrong. And we are supposed to be upholding moral rights.

Researcher You are moving away from it from an organizational functioning standpoint and considering it in terms of the basic purposes of the organization.

Principal Of the organization, right. If we look at those kind of questions in no different way than does a public institution, then we have no right to exist. We are loudly proclaiming to the world that we are different. If we don't act differently, then we are not. We can say it all we like, but it is in your actions, your principles are determined in your actions. (RI4T1\171-203)

I don't know if everybody shares this, but to me it makes some issues more important. Even though in some people's mind it might be a smaller issue or a less immediate problem. The reason I am elevating it is because I see that I have a moral obligation in that case. (RI4T1\216-223)

This dual set of overall purposes of the school guided Ron's actions in many situations. The educational priorities were important. Ron commented that the school

enjoyed a reputation for academic excellence and attracted almost 40% of its students from non Catholic families. The awards included awards for sports and citizenship but more existed for academic subjects. The school's goal of teaching students an understanding and appreciation of Christian moral principles was stressed. While Ron said that the two purposes could not be separated, it appeared that he was more willing to intervene in situations where he felt that there were implications for the moral tone and purposes of the school.

Administration and Leadership

Ron was asked to comment on any difference he saw between administration and leadership:

> Yes, to me administration is seeing that the place operates and leadership is acting towards achieving some more distant or general goal than just getting through the day or term. The administrator doesn't have to be the leader either. . . . Hazel for instance, is a very competent administrator, but you wouldn't classify her as a leader. . . . Anything she has suggested has been to make the administrative flow more easily. (RI4T1\322-340)

> In the long term, leadership would be more valuable because that is how you make progress towards objectives. But leadership without administrative backup would be a way to disillusion a lot of people because your ideals would not get realized if you do not have the administrative apparatus to support them. (RI4T1\354-360)

Ron agreed that his approach to what he termed administration had two main aspects: clear delegation of responsibilities to certain people and standard operating procedures. His role was to monitor those to whom duties were delegated, ensure that procedures were being followed and seek to solve any problems which arose with them (RI4T1\379-390). When questioned about how he practised leadership he responded:

> I like to do it by example and low key statements. I don't think that you gain anything by sermonizing. The superintendent does that and is really scoffed at. You don't (sermonize) because you tend to be perceived as setting yourself up as a great moral authority and a great example. You want to be perceived as an example, but you don't want to set yourself up that way and say how great you are. Nobody puts that into words, but by your actions you show that you think that you are number one and like you just don't do that. But you make low key comments and you bring people to a realization of what you want. (RI4Pt3T2\37-50)

This approach to achieving your purposes and demonstrating your beliefs through example was not always successful. The group of dissatisfied teachers was an example. Their perceptions of how and why things were done in the school differed from Ron's. Their behaviour demonstrated their beliefs - they believed that the system was unfair and they were complaining. Ron's previous attempts to bring them onside had not been successful and he is left with "an exercise in power."

> As I say, we try to lead by example and any time any thing was presented, it was carefully explained why the decision was made the way it was. . . . So, ah, but I am afraid that there are none so blind as those who will not see. And since obviously they are not going to see. . . . Since they won't listen, as I said, in the fall, I guess that they went too far this time and we are just going to have to meet it head on and there will have to be an exercise of power because evidently reason doesn't work. I mean if they are not really stomped on, there is going to be a festering sore that will make other people on the staff angry as well. They will be demanding action while they are bitching about whatever action is being taken as being discriminatory so I don't think that they can be pleased. So you will have to look at the morale of the rest of the people. (RI4Pt2T2\152-207)

Ron admitted that the school benefited from Hazel's administrative skills. She was a very well organized person and ensured that many of the details of the school's functioning were also well organized. Ron has very good people skills and a clear sense of where he wished the school to go. His style of leadership involved demonstrating his purposes through example. This reflected the belief that one lives one's beliefs and shows these beliefs through one's actions. In large measure this had worked well in this school. These beliefs about how a school should be operated are discussed more fully in the following section.

Themes

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) define a theme as, "some concept or theory that emerges from your data" (p.173). The themes which are emergent in this study outline the meaning of being a principal for Ron. Six major themes are discussed below. The first theme, "The Place has to Run", deals with Ron's views on the administrative system of the school. The second theme, "Accountability and Control", develops the idea that Ron felt responsible for his school and wanted to know what was happening. The third theme, "People Make the Place Run", outlined Ron's practice of working with and through people to achieve the purposes of the school. "Knowledge is Power", the fourth theme shows that in this school, the ability to control events or power was based on knowledge of the system and reasoned, planned proposals. For Ron, knowing his staff in various contexts also gave him the power to lead and direct their actions. The fifth theme, "Knowing Where the Place is Going", talks of Ron's vision for the school. The final Theme, "Leadership", talks of how Ron believes one should implement one's vision.

The Place has to Run

Ron said at one point, "The place has to run and it is the principal's responsibility to see that it does." Ron also commented that the things done in the school should be directed towards achieving the purposes of the school. It was important to him, that the routine operations of the school be accomplished smoothly. This was a very proactive stance towards administration - - recognizing in advance those things which needed done and putting in place procedures to deal with them. While he recognized that one could not prepare for every eventuality, he didn't really like surprises. He wanted to know what to expect and where possible to have planned for it.

Planning for the eventualities and things which needed doing, did not mean that Ron put the plans into effect himself. He believed in delegation and monitoring. Delegation meant ensuring that people who took on or were assigned duties, understood what they were responsible for. He outlined expectations when committees were struck and reviewed support staff job descriptions with them regularly. Delegation also involved a recognizing and utilizing the specialized knowledge, interests and skill which members of the staff have. Monitoring involved ensuring that things were done and being sensitive to routines and procedures which caused disruptions. Through this monitoring function, Ron both encouraged and supported the efforts of his staff and demonstrated that he was aware of what was happening in the school.

In addition to delegation, Ron dealt with many of the routine matters by putting in place a system of standard operating procedures and forms. Routines, procedures and standard operating practices have a value when they meet people's needs efficiently, but the people and their needs were more important than the rules. Ron

commented that doing something because it had always been done that way or because it was a rule was not reasonable. You had to look at the situation and the needs and wishes of the people involved and then do what made sense regardless of the rules. People and their reasonable requests were more important than rules to Ron.

Accountability and Control

Ron felt accountable for the operation of the school and expected to be the person to whom the school board or the public directed questions. While he did not feel the need to make each and every decision, if he was answerable for the decisions he wanted to know about them. It was important to Ron that he have access to the information about what was happening. At the same time, he wanted to give people the freedom to make decisions and take responsibilities without intervention. Ron said that freedom without limits becomes licence. While he wanted the staff to seek and accept the responsibility and to demonstrate this through careful well considered planning, they also needed to recognize the limits within which the school functioned. Very few requests were refused, showing that to a large degree the staff recognized and accepted their own role in the process.

Concern about accountability implies, in many cases, a lack of trust in others in the organization and a desire to protect one's own position. This was not so for Ron. Accountability meant understanding the rationale behind an action; ensuring that actions planned would support efforts to achieve the goals of the school; and, being able to explain to others the reasons for and validity of the plan.

Accountability cannot be totally separated from control. Ron maintained control over what happened in the school by maintaining control over the finances. He was willing to exercise that control in cases where he felt the planning or rationale was inadequate. He was the person who finally set the priorities and validated the proposals

made by the staff. Once he was personally convinced, he was willing to defend the decision to others in his official capacity. He said that knowing what was planned was more important to him than the control, but he still retained personal control over the budget process. Ron recognized that it was his role to assume responsibility for the school and that on occasion he needed a mechanism to exercise control.

People Make the Place Run

Ron felt that the staff and students formed a community of people who shared certain goals and beliefs and worked together to achieve a purpose. The staff were seen as being professionals who had specialized skill and knowledge. Parents sent their children to school so that the staff could provide educational services which the parents could not provide as well or as efficiently themselves. Much of how the school was operated seemed aimed at freeing teachers so that they could teach. Ron believed in making the school run by working through and with people, especially the teachers.

Teachers get their greatest satisfaction from teaching. In this school, Ron built the expectation that teachers had control of their own situations, that they could plan programs and have the resources to put them in place. It was important that actions be supported by reasons which Ron found to be educationally valid. Ron felt that he should involve them in those decisions which affected them. He sought their input, considered and discussed their suggestions and they mutually arrived at decisions. Ron felt that most teachers on this staff felt committed to the school, involved in the activities and respected for their abilities.

Knowledge is Power

In a reflective interview, Ron defined power as, "legal rights - what you could enforce legally if someone objects to it. Authority is something you gain from respect

and knowledge" (RI4T2\668-669). Thus power comes with the position or is delegated in a legal sense, while authority is earned. In both cases, power and authority allow one to plan programs, make decisions and to accomplish things. Power for a principal is resident in his position. Authority is not, it must be earned. Ron felt that exercising power often had costs associated with it - people who were forced into a given action would be more likely to be angry and resentful. Ron worked at maintaining the flow of information and being aware of what was happening in the school. He preferred to influence decisions at the start by setting parameters and expectations and latter on by making suggestions and by being supportive of people's efforts.

Power was resident in the hands of the staff as well. They could control what happened in their programs, spend money and plan activities. They could do this by making use of the system which Ron had but in place. Knowledge of how to work within the system gave them power. Ron created an expectation in the teachers that their plans would be approved given the expectations of appropriate planning. Knowledge of the system became power to implement actions. Control was transferred from the principal to the staff. This was Ron's goal, that the staff should be able to plan activities within the limits of board policy, available funds, and the provincial Program of Studies.

Knowing Where the Place is Going

Ron had a clear vision for his school. He saw the purpose of his school was to meet the individual educational needs of their students within a Christian moral setting. Ron has a deep feeling of commitment to students as individuals and in groups. He derived great satisfaction throughout his career from knowing and working with students and spoke of past experiences with students often. This personal interest in

the students in his school affected many of his actions. It influenced how he interacted with them in class and in the hallways and made their needs the priority issue in administering the school.

Ron said that the needs of students and the moral imperative could not be separated. This came from deeply held beliefs. For Ron, his beliefs determined his actions and imposed obligations on him to act in certain ways. He believed that his actions demonstrated his beliefs to those around him. While Ron agreed that it was important for others in the school to share similar beliefs and commitments, he was unwilling to expound on his beliefs except in extreme cases. This desire to lead by example was evident in the efforts he expended to develop the relationships between members of staff. Healthy, supportive relationships were seen as a means to enlist commitment and a sense of community amongst the staff. Ron thought that a staff which could get along in a variety of situations was best able to work together and be effective in their classrooms.

The actions of most of the teachers in this school indicated that they shared this vision. The researcher observed that they gathered together before and after school and were kind and supportive of each other. Repeated examples of cooperative planning, sharing of resources, and discussions of teaching methods and materials were observed. On several occasions, Ron commented on how well supported social activities were and how well the majority of the staff got on together.

Leadership

Ron defined leadership as being those things which help the organization achieve its goals or improve itself and different from administration which he saw as keeping the system operating smoothly. Leadership meant implementing the vision and Ron led by example where at all possible, since he did not believe in verbalizing or

labelling his beliefs except in extreme cases. If others perceived his actions to mean something other than that which he had intended, communication broke down, frustration grew and commitment was lost. Ron believed in working through and with people and was unhappy exercising his formal power. He would do so when he felt that the actions of people threatened the school or its ability to achieve its goals.

Ron sought new challenges and opportunities for himself, his students and his staff. He saw himself as opening vistas they had never felt possible and standing there with the safety line available for when they needed it. New programs in music and cross-country skiing were developed and a major field trip to Europe was organized while Ron was principal.

For Ron, leadership also imposed an obligation to move on. When he had developed the system to the point that he felt suggestions for change were becoming a personal attack, then it was time to move. He would have given the school and the people there what he could and the school would need a new principal if it was to continue to improve. The needs of the students and the school had priority.

Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of this study. It began with a section describing the school and its setting, the staff, and the administrative structure of the school. The background of the principal was briefly described and some general impressions of the school were reported. Care was taken to delete or change details of these and following sections to ensure that the identity of those involved was not divulged inappropriately. The second section of this chapter consists of a composite day based on observations made over a number of days. The third section consists of sets of incidents and reflections which demonstrate important aspects of the principal's

beliefs about his work. The final section of themes presents a composite view of Ron's beliefs about being a principal.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter consists of five sections: First, the study is summarized, and then reflections on the study in relation to current literature are presented. The third section presents the personal reflections of the author. Certain implications of this study for research and practise are discussed in the next section. The fifth and final section consists of concluding remarks.

Summary

This study describes an interpretive case study of a principalship. It examined in depth the efforts of one person in one situation. The study sought to examine what this principal did and said about his work with the view to gaining an understanding of what it meant to be a principal for him in this situation. Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p. 58) liken a case study methodology to a funnel. As one gathers, reviews and analyzes data, one makes decisions on how to proceed and what aspects will become foci of the study. The opportunity to gain a fuller and richer understanding grows from within the context being studied.

In this study, non-participant observation and reflective interview techniques were chosen as data gathering methods. It was felt that this combination of techniques would lead to clear understanding of the principal's beliefs about administration and that these understandings would be more valid if they were grounded in the observed actions of the principal.

The principal who participated in the study had been known to the researcher previously. A reflective person, he had many years of experience as a school administrator. A level of trust and understanding existed between the researcher and principal which formed the basis of the research relationship. The request for participation was made, initially, in person to the principal and over the telephone to his superintendent. These requests were followed by letters explaining the purpose of the study, the time commitments involved, the principal's rights to withdraw and to control the uses made of the data, and the efforts which would be made to ensure that confidentiality was respected.

A second rural principal was approached and asked to participate in a pilot study. The purposes of the pilot study were to provide the researcher with an opportunity to practise the observational and data analysis techniques and to verify that the researcher possessed the skills to complete the study. The analysis of the pilot study were presented to and discussed with the principal observed. He commented favourably on the value of having an opportunity to pause and reflect on his actions and beliefs.

Data for the main study were gathered over a series of six sessions in the spring of 1988. The first session was during a regular staff meeting when the researcher was introduced to the staff and explained the project to them. The following sessions each consisted of an observation session followed by a reflective interview. During the first session, the principal wore a wireless microphone. It was discovered that the wireless microphone had a limited range, so instead the researcher wore a small lapel microphone connected to a portable cassette recorder which picked up both voices. Anecdotal notes of events which occurred, reactions observed, and questions which came up during the observation were also recorded. These formed the basis of the

reflective interviews which followed the observations. These interviews were also tape recorded.

Data tapes were listened to several times and transcribed by the researcher. Initial data analysis occured at this time. Incidents and reflections were extracted from the transcripts and categorized. Questions which arose during the transcription and analysis were recorded and included in the next reflective interview. Analysis was on-going and continued through the writing stage. Most of the transcripts were read by the principal and the analysis was read by him to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

The findings were reported in four parts. The first part described the setting and background of the school, staff and principal. The second section of the findings presented a composite day made up of incidents extracted from all of the observation sessions. The third section examined what the principal did and his reflections on his actions under nine major headings: Communication, Establishing and Maintaining Relationships, Managing Change, Decision Making, Financial Questions, Routine Items, Day to Day Items, Importance of Different Issues, and Administration and Leadership. From these sections, six themes were developed which outlined Ron's beliefs about the responsibilities of the principal.

Ron believed in a proactive approach to administration. The first theme, "The Place has to Run", deals with Ron's views on the administrative system of the school. The second theme, "Accountability and Control", develops the idea that Ron felt responsible for his school and wanted to know what was happening. The third theme, "People Make the Place Run", outlined Ron's practise of working with and through people to achieve the purposes of the school. "Knowledge is Power", the fourth theme, shows that in this school the ability to control events or power was based on

knowledge of the system and reasoned, planned proposals. For Ron, knowing his staff in various contexts also gave him the power to lead and direct their actions. The fifth theme, "Knowing Where the Place is Going", talks of Ron's vision for the school. The final Theme, "Leadership", talks of how Ron believes one should implement one's vision.

This final chapter goes on, from this summary of the study, to reflect on the findings in relation to the current literature, to offer some personal reflections of the researcher and to discuss implications of the study for research and practice.

Reflections on the Study in Relation to the Literature

What he Does

The findings of this study report that the work of the principal involved communication, establishing and maintaining relationships, managing change, decision making, financial questions, dealing with routine and one-time items. Reflections produced two further categories concerned with the importance of different issues and Ron's views on administration and leadership. The importance of these activities is supported in the literature in large measure.

Communication

Many studies (Kmetz and Willower, 1982; Martin and Willower, 1981; Pitner, 1982) have pointed out that much of the work of a principal involves communication, often verbal, brief, fragmented, and often initiated by others. McEvoy (1987) reports that between 60% and 70% of a principal's daily activities fell under the heading of communicating. Doll (1983) characterises communication and coordination as, "Twin resources for supervisors" (p. 321). Greenfield (1986) noted that the brief, varied, informal interchanges observed in the work of a principal had meanings when viewed

in terms of the principal's vision for their school - they used these interchanges and activities to advance their and others views of the school (p.137). Manasse (1986) supported by Andrew, et al., (1985) and Blumberg (1989) pointed out that leaders use a variety of formal and informal communications networks, ordinary tasks and interactions as opportunities to gather information about the organization and the people in it and to convey to those people the vision they have for the organization. The largest portion of their work involved the routine activities of monitoring and communicating (p.138). Gronn (1983) views talk as the key mechanism through which both the principal and members of the staff are able to exercise control in the school;

> Talk does things for the speaker, making known his or her version of something to others that must be attended to: second, talk gets others to do things, not only to take note or account of what is said, but to be influenced by what is said. (Gronn, 1983, p. 17).

Studies by Kmetz and Willower (1982), Martin and Willower (1981), and Pitner, (1982) note the verbal interactions by principals were often initiated by others. Gronn (1983) notes that staff in a school are used to exercising control in their classrooms and that teacher talk is used to exercise this control (p.17-18). He states that talk is a technique available to both principals and staff and thus others will initiate conversations with the principal. Manasse (1986) and March (1984) note that it is more important to focus on what is being said and the message conveyed than on who initiated the discussion. As Blumberg (1989) states, "the words and the images of the school they convey provide the organizing theme for action" (p. 79).

Much of Ron's daily activities involved communicating. Asking and answering questions, gathering information, providing information, seeking advice and so on. Ron used these routine interchanges to advance his vision of the school. He

encouraged teacher's efforts, responded to their concerns, encouraged them, protected them from demands which took them away from teaching, supported efforts to maintain the tone of the school, and set examples of his expectations. He also listened to their concerns, plans, suggestions, frustrations, successes, and expectations. Ron asked the teacher questions to clarify his understanding of the teacher's views or request and sought their views if they had special expertise or involvement with an issue. Understanding developed through the discussion and so much of how he did his work was verbal and interactive.

Ron used written forms and memos often. He felt that this increased the chance that information was actually conveyed to those who should have it. The forms and procedures were also used to gather information about the school, monitor activities and maintain control. His preference was for verbal, face to face communication but felt that with increasing size more things needed to be written down. Thus he would often follow up a verbal announcement in the staff room or staff meeting with a written note. Campbell, Corbally, and Nystrand (1983) and Doll (1983) state that communications are most effective on a personal verbal basis and urge care to ensure that written communications convey the message intended.

The literature and this study support the central position that talking to people plays a part in the way an organization is administered. It is important to keep in mind that the communication served a variety of purposes. The central position of talk as a method for controlling events and the direction of the organization is supported in both the literature and this study. The substance of the words used conveys only part of the messages conveyed and received. Furthermore, talk was seen as a technique for monitoring actions, encouraging staff or students efforts, gathering information, and emphasising the important beliefs in an organization. Ron considered the development and maintenance of relationships to be an important part of how he did his work.

Establishing and Maintaining Relationships

Ron commented repeatedly that his staff were professional people with skills, knowledge and credibility. He felt that, in large measure, they could be counted upon to have the interests of their students foremost and to wish to improve their own skill and practice. This view of teachers as professionals is commonly accepted in Alberta, but does not seem to be as common in literature from the United States. Rallis (1988) urges consideration of "teacher empowerment - teachers assuming greater control of their work and greater responsibility for their professional growth." (p. 643) yet warns of the obstacles inherent in both teacher's attitudes to their work and administrators who adopt an adversarial stance towards teachers. Campbell, Corbally, and Nystrand (1983, p. 52) also report broad variations among school districts in the degree to which teachers are considered professionals. Gronn (1983, p. 7) notes that the practice of principals being chosen from the ranks of teachers promotes the view that teachers and principals are more equal in status than one subordinate to another.

Hoy and Miskel (1987) list seven characteristics of a professional orientation, technical expertise, an objective perspective, impartiality, service to clients, a colleague-oriented reference group, autonomy in decision making, and self-imposed standards of ethics and control (p.150). Ron recognized these characteristics and sought a collegial relationship with his staff. For him, they were all members of a community created to achieve a shared purpose. This sense of shared community caused Ron to work hard at establishing and maintaining the relationships he had with his staff.

Andrew, et al. (1985) stress the role of open communication, careful listening, absence of cliques, a sense of mission, participation in decision making and recognition of teachers' contributions in ensuring a school with good staff morale (p.26-28).

Peters and Waterman (1982) stress the importance of informal groups, informal communication, supporting individual efforts, building team spirit, and celebrations. Through these activities, they contend that people come to share a vision of what needs to be done, seek the innovative ways of doing it, and develop a commitment to this vision. Leithwood and Montgomery (1986, p. 87-88) state that effective principals act to build and maintain interpersonal relationships with staff. Strategies recommended include involving staff in decision making; doing things with the staff - - professional development activities and social activities; being positive and encouraging; being available to the staff; and, being honest, direct, and sincere with the staff.

This supports Ron's view that if people know and can get along with each other in a variety of situations, they can work together more effectively. He commented that the staff did not really have any cliques and that they generally got along well together. There were several formal and informal events and celebrations in the school year and most staff chose to come together at various times of the day informally for a coffee and visit in the staff room. Ron encouraged these activities by participating in them, making his home available, and organizing an annual party at Teacher's Convention.

Sergiovanni and Starratt (1988) advance a model of human resources supervision. They contend that, "teacher satisfaction results from the successful accomplishment of meaningful work, and that this accomplishment is the key component to building school success." (p. 13). This model urges a career-long view of supervision which focuses on the efforts a principal can make to improve his staff and the effectiveness of their teaching. They urge acceptance of a "mindscape" of supervision which seeks to make sense out of classroom and teaching events in order to be helpful and/or encourage meaningful change. Implicit in this is a sense of cooperation and joint action which recognizes the contribution of both the staff member and the supervisor in the process of encouraging improvement.

Ron used a number of informal and formal opportunities to keep informed and talk to his teachers about what they were doing. He collected long range plans and many teachers kept him informed of changes. He often talked to people about what they were doing, asking how things had worked for them and offering suggestions. Staff members sought his advice when they were having difficulty with something or when their class was having problems grasping a concept. Ron said that he was often able to make suggestions, share resources with them, or put them in contact with someone who could help them.

Managing Change

Included in what Ron referred to as managing change were aspects of school improvement, efficient management, professional development and personal growth. Hughes and Ubben (1989) support the view that good management practises contribute greatly to a well run school. Sergiovanni (1984) supported by Montgomerie, McIntosh and Mattson (1987) considers the technical management leadership forces as a basic aspect of both competent and excellent schooling. Manasse (1986) states that a lack of a systems perspective can be noted in less effective managers who become overwhelmed with day to day crisis and operations.

Ron contended that his role in the management of the school lay in the establishment of the system, setting guidelines and monitoring how smoothly the system functioned. Furthermore, he said that those principals who did not delegate and develop systems would be lost dealing with details better handled by others and would have no time for those aspects of the job which where really important. He defined these as activities which helped the school to better achieve its purpose. He considered efficient management to be the basis upon which one could exercise leadership and move the school closer to what it could become.

Teachers do the work of the school and Ron felt that, as a principal, he could have a greater effect by helping teachers than he did as a classroom teacher. Cuban (1986) states that one of the core roles of principaling is the instructional role in which principals saw themselves as teachers of teachers: helping teachers improve their instruction. Cuban writes,

> The principal as teacher refers to the means principals use to persuade adults to alter their beliefs and behaviour in moving toward goals that the principal seeks. Through shaping purpose, designing structures and tasks, communication skills, personal example, and numerous other informal means, the principal teaches. (p. 113)

Saphier and King (1985), writing on school improvement, stress that effective principals work with and support their teachers by encouraging them to seek new knowledge and skills and by recognizing and appreciating their efforts. Andrew, et al. (1985) note that improving teacher effectiveness requires provision of opportunities for growth and development and teacher involvement in the planning of inservice activities.

Ron attended conferences himself, informed teachers of conferences which might interest them, and monitored the system by which they received financial support. He talked to teachers personally after they had returned from a conference and, in so doing, showed the value he placed on professional growth and on collegial relationships. Often he did these things through short conversations or by putting a notice in a teacher's mail box and then speaking to them. Teachers were encouraged to discuss and share things they had learned at workshops and to suggest programs or materials which they had learned about which might benefit others in the school. This served to develop cooperation, rapport, and mutual respect amongst the staff.

Decision Making

The literature on decision making is vast. Herbert Simon (Pugh, Hickson and Hinings, 1983, p.103) equated management to decision making. Simon contended that the traditional view of decision making, where one rationally examined all of the available alternatives and selected the best in order to maximize one's returns, was not practical given the limits on human rationality. He proposed a model of an "administrative man" (sic) who satisfices or chooses a course of action which is satisfactory and adjusts it as needed. Vroom and Yetton (Pugh, Hickson and Hinings, 1983, p. 119-123) describe a decision making model which attempts to address needs for rationality, acceptance by subordinates time available in which to make the decision, and to define the processes by which a decision should be made. These and other rigorous models of decision making (Hughes &Ubben, 1989, pp. 371-390; Owens, 1987, pp. 267-293) stress the importance of rationality, participation of those involved, recognition of the needs of the participants and the organization, and the utility of established processes for decision making.

It was important to Ron that decisions be thought out and courses of action have valid supportable reasons. Yet, he also felt that for any situation or problem, there were a range of responses which would be acceptable. This willingness to be flexible allowed a degree of latitude in the decisions others or committees could make before Ron was concerned enough to intervene.

Ron felt that many items were of a routine and regular nature and could be dealt with through policy and procedure. He also generally delegated this type of duty to someone else. Other issues occurred infrequently and were of little importance. He felt that these should be dealt with in a common sense way. The final group of issues were those which he felt affected the purposes of the school. These he judged to be the most

important. As a separate school, he felt that the moral teachings of the Church imposed an obligation for action on those who were in the school and placed issues in different perspectives than one would have in a public school. He commented that while he tried to gather as much information as he could, when he felt that he understood an issue or concern he tried to seek the common sense solution.

The issue of finding a place for the smokers on staff seems to be a case of satisficing. A number of alternative locations had been tried in the past and the present one was proving unsatisfactory. Ron went and examined the next suggestion and thought it would work. He was ready to accept this solution until difficulties with it were pointed out by a teacher. They sought another possible solution and accepted that one. Ron reflected later that he felt that some arrangement needed to be made for this small group of people, but that the issue was not really all that important - it did not effect the basic goals or purposes of the school and only three teachers or support staff still smoked.

Peterson (1986) talks of the way in which vision, problem finding and problem solving are interrelated. He contends that the process by which principals define issues as problems is as important as the way they go about resolving them. Further, he contends that a principal's vision both defines what he will consider important and shapes those solutions he is willing to consider. In this study, Ron became very concerned about one teacher's comments about a special needs child. He intervened and voiced the belief that the child should be treated with Christian compassion and understanding. Ron felt that there was a problem in this situation in that he saw that separate schools had a set of basic beliefs which imposed an obligation on the teachers to act in keeping with these. He also saw that his actions should speak his beliefs and felt that other should also act consistent with their beliefs. When the committee responsible for organizing the track meet had not called a staff meeting to inform others

of their plans, he was unwilling to intervene. He commented that some sort of track meet would be held and that students and staff would all have a good time. He was not concerned and did not want to reduce the autonomy of the committee by intervening. These incidents illustrate that his beliefs determined when Ron felt he had "found" a problem and how he sought to resolve it.

Ownership and Participation in Decision Making

As noted above, many writers have indicated that people feel more ownership of and commitment to decisions they were involved in making (Hughes and Ubben, 1989; Owens, 1987; Saphier and King, 1985; Simon and Vroom in Pugh, Hickson and Hinings, 1983). Participatory decision making develops collegiality, trust and confidence and commitment to the important values in the organization (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Saphier and King, 1985). People do not wish to be involved in making decisions which they do not feel have any impact on them.

Ron made consistent efforts to put decisions in the hands of his teachers and to recognize and respect them for their contributions. His system of divisional meetings to discuss issues of import to teachers of similar grades and delegation of activities and responsibilities were further examples of this.

Administration and Leadership

Taking charge and assuming leadership are factors associated with effective schools. Ron contended that administration - - ensuring that the school operated smoothly, and leadership - - those activities which moved the school closer to its goals or helped it achieve its purpose, were both needed for the school to operate well. This view is supported in the literature. Miklos (1983), Sergiovanni (1984) and Montgomerie, McIntosh, & Mattson (1987) discussed the leadership roles filled by

principals. The Sergiovanni Model includes five leadership forces, the first three - - technical, human, and educational leadership are seen as necessary for the competent operation of a school; and symbolic and cultural leadership are needed, if the school is to be considered excellent. Montgomerie et al., (1987) combine the symbolic and cultural leadership dimensions and add one of disciplinarian. Sergiovanni points out that excellent schooling must go beyond the competent provision of educational service and the smooth operation of the educational plant, to recognize the effects of symbols and organizational culture on the operation of the school. Peters and Waterman (1982) in their study of excellent companies found this same emphasis - on the culture of the organization and the use of symbols and myths to maintain and demonstrate this culture. Owens (1987, p. 29 - 30) feels organizational culture consists of the norms, values, assumptions and beliefs which tell people what is acceptable, important and valuable to members of that group. Renihan and Renihan (1984) and Manasse (1985) in reviews of the literature on effective schools underscore the importance of the principal's role in defining the culture and providing a sense of the mission or vision of the school.

Kmetz and Willower (1982), Martin and Willower (1981), and Pitner (1982) commented that principal's work is characterized by, among other things, frequent interruptions and many small tasks initiated by others. Interruptions did occur in Ron's day and much of what he dealt with seemed to be of a minor nature and initiated by others. Many of these items occurred before school and during recess and noon breaks. During this time, Ron made himself available to the teachers as much as possible for the express purpose of dealing with the issues with which they were concerned. In most cases, he provided information about procedures or answered questions rather than taking action himself. He sought to support the efforts of his staff. In his view, rather than being interrupted by a series of tasks initiated by others,

he was serving as an information resource and being supportive of the efforts of his staff. They initiated interactions in that they were seen to have a leadership role within their own program area.

Ron felt strongly that one should lead by example and avoid "sermonizing". He felt that one could know him and his beliefs by his actions. He was willing to intervene when he felt that it was needed, but this generally meant that something had gone too far rather than talking about what he saw as important in a more general situation. Greenfield (1986), Blumberg and Greenfield (1986), and Sergiovanni and Starratt (1988) discuss the moral component of administrative action. Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) point out that often administrators are placed in the position of choosing between two competing standards of goodness. A moral component of actions and positions underlines all an administrator does (p. 226). These authors support Ron's position that one must be aware of the moral implications of one's actions.

Several writers have noted the importance of ensuring that your actions, words, and beliefs are consistent (Andrew, et al.,1985; Doll, 1983; Greenfield, 1986). Greenfield (1986) reports that Frances Hedges, a principal in one of the Far West Laboratories Case Studies,

> uses practically every available opportunity to build and reinforce a school culture that is child-centered and nurturing, and places a high value on students social responsibility, and their learning and development. . . . She sends frequent and consistent signals to parents, teachers, and students about her values, beliefs, and priorities for Orchard Park and the children it serves. (Greenfield, 1986,134)

Manasse (1986) states that leaders are involved in change and without change, there is no leadership. She goes on to say that effective leaders use the everyday tasks

and interactions as opportunities to plant ideas that convey their vision and suggest interpretations of events. The effectiveness of certain leaders comes, according to Manasse (1986), not from what they do, since studies have shown that most engage in very similar activities, but in their beliefs about their actions and how they communicate these beliefs while they act : "Leadership involves the infusion of routine activities with meaning and vision" (Manasse, 1986, p. 154).

The literature supports the central position that leadership plays in effective schools. Leadership is seen to be made up of three to five forces by different theorists. In addition, Ron's leadership style relied heavily on leading by example and having a moral basis for his actions. Various writers support the moral component of administrative actions and the need to be seen as consistent and predictable. Despite the best of intentions, in Ron's style of leadership, if a member of staff was not successful at identifying or labelling Ron's actions and thus his beliefs, his attempts to enlist his or her commitment were in danger of failure. Commitment results from shared understanding and mutual acceptance of a set of values and beliefs. Manasse (1986) and Peters and Waterman (1982) show that this is more likely in situations where the important aspects of the organization are talked about a lot and people's efforts to achieve these are encouraged and celebrated. The state that one must talk about one's beliefs as well as act in keeping with those beliefs.

Personal Reflections

The process of analysis and writing which has resulted in this document has caused me to reflect on my own views on the principalship. Schools are complex organizations with many forces acting on them. Schools are expected to cope with the myriad of forces, influences, demands, and desires. In spite of this, this study and much of the literature on effective schools shows that calm, happy, purposeful schools

can and do exist. The potential for influence available to a principal is exciting and frightening.

The process of this study, observing Ron in his school and reflecting with him, resulted in a concentrated mentoring type of relationship. We have been friends for a number of years and often discussed schools, our successes and our frustrations. This was more like the relationship one would find between any two people who shared a profession than a mentoring relationship. In the course of this study, we focussed on administration, why he acted in the way he did. I was able to suggest things and gain the benefit of his knowledge and experience to understand what may have been the result of my suggestion.

One of the values of studying one person in some depth over a period of time is that one comes to appreciate that person's style and the uniqueness of it. Each person will produce a synthesis of beliefs and actions which is unique. As we come to understand the actions of another person, we will recognize that there are many things we would have done in a similar fashion. This serves to validate our own actions. We will also see that they deal with certain issues differently than we would have and yet the results are still satisfactory. I learned that it is important to recognize the need to be flexible or to accept a range of responses to a given situation.

Ron worked through and with his teachers. He believed in empowering them so that they could act effectively to achieve the purposes of the school. Empowering others involves risks and trust. The risk is reduced and the trust justified when people have a proven track record. Ron talks about people beginning with a certain basic level of credibility and earning more or losing what they have. Credibility is not implicit in a person, it is a perceived level of competence and it defines the latitude we are willing to grant another person.

Implicit in granting power to others is the notion that they have the opportunity to succeed, fail, and to define success or failure. Often we lack the perspective to define success or failure. We become so involved in the details of what we are doing, that we lose sight of what we wanted in the first place. No activity or program is going to be perfect. A principalship provides one with a unique perspective from which to define success and imposes an obligation to tell people what you think was successful. I saw the importance of a clear vision of what is important in a school. The concept, that your vision helps you define problems and opportunities, is very powerful. Ron gave the impression of being in charge of his own agenda. This was because some issues were not considered important and were dealt with in a routine fashion or by accepting the first feasible solution. Thus, he chose those things he would devote his efforts to and was not ruled by the minutae.

Perceptions are reality. People rule their actions based on their perceptions of what is happening around them. If a person perceives your actions differently than you had intended, the communication has failed. Managing perceptions becomes a dilemma for an administrator. One side of the dilemma comes when you push too hard. Then you can be seen as manipulative. The other aspect occurs when you do not label your actions and beliefs and run the risk of being misunderstood. Your beliefs, your actions and what you say about your beliefs and actions must be consistent. If there is any perceptions of an inconsistency, you can appear to be out of touch, uncaring and/or dishonest.

Ron perceived his staff to be professionals and expected them to act in a fashion consistent with their beliefs. This was the way that he operated, but it cannot be assumed that all others will do so. In this staff, misunderstanding developed into deteriorating staff relations. Good staff relations are based on trust as well as on

knowing the people you work with. Trust is a perception and defined in the mind of the perceiver. I do not feel that Ron understood how deeply the small group of dissatisfied teachers felt about the issues they saw as unfair. If he had understood the depth of their feeling, I am sure that he would have made other efforts to resolve the problem as it was perceived by them. Personality conflicts will arise in any group of people but I see it as part of a principal's role to ensure that these resolve themselves or are resolved so that the school does not suffer.

This study has shown me the positive impact that a principal can have on his school. Ron worked at understanding the needs and aspirations of his staff. This was a complex ongoing task but of crucial importance. On the one hand, one must be supportive and provide for people's needs. On the other hand, one must challenge them to grow and develop. Since each is an individual, the relationship with each must recognize those differences and yet the principal needs to be perceived as treating all fairly if not equally.

I feel that it is important to talk about what you think is important. The process of talking about what is important in a school and coming to a shared understanding of this is important, but incomplete. The implications of your decisions for the school need to be discussed, actions planned, and the group needs to agree to the implementation of the plan. Lack of acceptance of a decision by part of the group can have negative results in terms of staff morale and the consistency with which a decision is implemented. Commitment grows but it needs to be encouraged and nurtured.

A final reflection concerns the need to examine ideas current in the literature critically. Teaching is an incredibly complex task and the literature cannot begin to describe this complexity. Our situation in education in Alberta is very different from that which exists in other provinces or in much of the United States. Principals and

teachers are on a much more equal and collegial basis. Implicit in much of the literature is a superordinate-subordinate bias which is not in keeping with a collegial model. The view of teachers as technicians and principals as members of a separate profession leads to a view that administration is something done to a group of people rather than done with them. One must be careful to examine the literature and any suggestions included in terms of its applicability in our situation. Much is good, but much is either simplistic or inappropriate to our situation. Much has been said about the need for effective principals to have a clear and concrete vision for their schools, but I feel that it is more important for staffs to develop a shared vision for their schools and a commitment to achieving that vision. Schools work best as a community of people cooperating to serve students. If we do not share a sense of purpose and direction, individual classrooms become like one room schools sharing a hallway.

Implications for Research and Practise

Several issues arose in this study which suggest the need for further research. This study and the pilot study were conducted in rural schools. I feel that teaching in rural schools is different from teaching in a suburban or urban school. This may well represent a personal bias in that I have enjoyed living and working in rural Alberta. Easily one third of all schools in Alberta serve rural students and yet most research is conducted gathering data from urban situations. Rural administrators are often even more isolated from their peers than are urban administrators. Research which examined the concerns and needs of rural administrators would prove of interest. I found that access to rural schools for observations or other research purposes was very easy since the requests were unusual, unlike the excessive demands placed on certain urban schools. Students may well be encouraged to seek rural sites for their studies on the basis of this ease of access and a relative shortage of studies done in rural situations.

The relationship between the researcher and the principal became much more focused through the course of the study. Barnett (1986) reports on a professional development program for principals which grew out of the Far West Laboratory case studies of effective principals. This was called the "Peer-Assisted Leadership Program" and involved teams of principals who shadowed each other and then engaged in reflective interviews in order to develop case studies of each principal. They found a reduced sense of isolation, the development of new skills, and an increased ability to engage in self-examination and reflection resulted from participation in this program. The techniques of this program closely match the methodology of this study. Graduate programs in educational administration are not always seen as preparation for the principalship, but for those seeking such positions the possible developmental potential of this type of experience appears to be significant. Further research may verify the validity of inclusion of a structured observation and reflection component in the programs of students interested in the principalship.

Few interpretive case studies have been carried out focusing on the principalship. The Far West Laboratory Case studies of effective principals showed the potential that exists for secondary analysis of the data from extensive case studies. A set of studies by a group of researchers using similar methodologies with a variety of subjects would provide a valuable data base for further interpretive analysis. The present study utilized a developing methodology and ongoing data analysis. Coordination between a group of studies may prove difficult to maintain or may impose severe constraints on the progress of the studies such that secondary analysis of the results becomes difficult. Nevertheless, a group of studies of this nature would prove interesting.

This study intended to seek understanding of meanings of one principal's actions in one situation. Since no attempt was made to seek general statements or confirmation of theories of action, implications for practise should be approached with caution. Given that caution, several implications arise from this study. First, this study methodology involved both observations and reflections on what was done and why. The principals involved in the pilot and main studies both noted how unusual it was for them to be able to share part of their work day with another person and the value they gained from a structured period of reflection. Reflection involves bringing our actions to a conscious level, celebrating our successes, defining our failures, and understanding the rationale behind those actions. We can not change if we do not first see what we are actually doing. Principals should be encouraged to visit other schools, observe the actions of other principals and to spend some time reflecting on how they each viewed certain situations. Within their own schools and schedules, time should be set aside for reflection. Individual principals and jurisdictions could develop systems which formalized this concept. Two or more principals could be given the opportunity to observe each other and then discuss and reflect upon the observed actions and their understandings. As a cooperating teacher, I found that my student teachers and I both benefited from keeping reflective journals and from the sharing of these reflections.

Second, Ron put a great deal of effort into developing relationships, getting to know people on his staff and letting them know him. In spite of the best of intentions, he still had a small group of people who did not share his understanding of how and why decisions had been made in the school. They felt that their perceptions of the situation were being ignored and in frustration and anger resorted to more severe responses. As discussed above, perceptions define reality for people. We run risks when we simply discount another's perceptions as being inaccurate. While you cannot appear to manipulate a person's perceptions, principals must constantly be aware of

them. In our dealings with others we need to remain cognizant of the importance of open honest and frequent discussions and careful, sensitive listening to ensure that all understand things in the same way.

Concluding Comments

Human organizations are affected by a wide range of factors. When one examines one person's actions in an organization and organization in detail, one runs the risk of losing sight of the whole while concentrating on the parts. This school had a happy productive tone and people moved and worked in it in a purposeful fashion. It was smoothly administered with few crises arising. Ron controlled his own agenda; while being available to his staff if they felt they needed him, the system freed him to apply his efforts where he felt they would have the greatest effect. He was seen by his staff as being informed of what was happening in the school and caring about them and their work. It was a good school where I would be happy to have sent my daughters.

I enjoyed my time in the school and felt a ready acceptance of my presence and actions by everyone on the staff. Ron was free with his time far beyond reasonable expectations. He helped me to understand his work and to appreciate the work of an effective principal.

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APPENDIX 1

Letter to Superintendent

March 11, 1988

Dear Sir;

I would like to request your permission to conduct research for my Master of Education Thesis in the RCSSD # school. The purpose is to to focus on the actions of the principal as he accomplishes his daily tasks and his understanding of the alternatives, implications, and potential outcomes of his actions. By focussing on the actions, we hope to understand the process by which the principal understands them.

This study will utilize non-participant observation and interview techniques. Over the course of three or more half day sessions, the researcher will observe and record the activities of the principal and take anecdotal notes. During the course of the observation, an attempt will be made to record as complete an account as is possible of the conversations, actions, and events occurring during that stage of the principal's day. These notes will provide the basis for the recall of events and the reflective examination during subsequent interviews.

Mr. was selected to participate in this study for a number of reasons. I worked with him several years ago in School. He is a knowledgeable and experienced principal who is reflective on the practice of his profession. Our friendship provides a relationship of trust and acceptance which will facilitate the examination of issues. This study has been informally discussed with Mr. and his participation sought. A copy of the letter to him seeking formal agreement to participate has been included. Since a portion of the data gathering will take place during school time, it is also appropriate that the superintendent's permission be sought.The identity of the principal, the school, school system and town will be carefully protected. Tapes and transcripts will be labeled with a code to protect confidentiality. Upon completion of

the research project and acceptance of the thesis, the tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. In any written material produced, the descriptive characteristics of the people, school, and system will be changed to protect their identity.

I will be telephoning you in the near future to answer any further questions which you may have concerning this research project and look forward to a favourable response to my request.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

R. J. Ainsworth

APPENDIX 2

Letter to Principal

March 18, 1988

Dear Ron;

Further to our conversation at Teacher's Convention, this is a formal request for your participation in the research for my Master Thesis. I have written to your superintendent as well and a copy of that letter has been enclosed for your information. In this letter, I would like to explain the purpose of the study, the methodology to be used to gather data, the expected time commitments, your right to withdraw from the project at any stage, and your right to control the inclusion or deletion of any material from the report.

The purpose is to focus on the actions of the principal as he accomplishes his daily tasks and his understanding of the alternatives, implications, and potential outcomes of examine his actions.

Non-participant observation and reflective interviews will be used to gather the data. Thus, I would like to follow you around and take anecdotal notes of your activities and tape record conversations you have during the course of the observation periods. Following these observations, these notes will serve to stimulate recall of the events. I would like to have an interview with you in which you reflect on the events of the day and their implications. Each observation period will consist of about one half of a day during school time. The interview may be at any time following that is

convenient for you, most likely after school. Each of these may take about two hours. In all, I would hope to have three or more observation periods.

The tapes will be transcribed and the field notes incorporated into them where appropriate and an initial examination of them will be made to attempt to understand the findings in terms of my research questions and the implications for practice from the literature. I would like you to go over these with me to verify or elaborate on the findings which develop. These interviews will be arranged at your convenience, again evenings or weekends are fine. We will see a lot of each other, should you continue to be willing to participate.

The case study methodology attempts to gain in-depth understandings of given situations. The amount of time involved and the degree to which you are involved in reflection and analysis makes your role more that of co-researcher than research subject. You have and should be willing to exercise ownership rights over the data gathered and any notes or tapes; and, the inclusion or deletion of materials from the final report. Notes, tapes and transcripts will be labeled with a code and stored securely to protect anonymity. Once my thesis is written and defended, it is my intent to destroy these materials. In addition, the identity of yourself, the school, school system and town will be carefully protected. In any written material produced, the descriptive characteristics of the people, school, and system will be changed to protect their anonymity.

At any time and for any reason, it is your right to withdraw from participation in the project. I hope that you will always feel able to exercise this right. The intention of this research study is to gain understanding and not to be threatening in any way. This is the major reason for the concern with anonymity, confidentiality, and the rights of the research participants.

I will be telephoning you in the near future to determine if you are still willing to participate or to answer any questions you may have. If you are willing, I would like to arrange an appointment for the first observation and interview.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours truly,

R. J. Ainsworth

APPENDIX 3

Sample of Transcripts

This appendix includes a section of the tape recorded transcripts. This selection is printed with normal margins, but for data analysis purposes, a three inch right margin was used to provide room for written comments and questions which arose as the analysis proceeded. Names have been deleted to ensure anonymity. This observation session was the first observation of a portion of a regular day.

TAPE 1 April 18, 1988 - Thesis Data

This observation period began with the last recess at the school and continued until the principal left the school for the day. Reflective interview followed.

Background noise in staff room

P How are You? (to a teacher)

T I am not talking to you.

P You are not talking to me (laughs)?

T I am just going to be quiet when you are wired up.

P Oh (more laughter).

P (indistinct)

S Hello.

P This, I guess you can just file this. It said we paid our bill, which is always nice to know.

S Ok.

P Oh yeah. This is (Name Deleted) conference. (sound of steps) (other voices in the office) If I give this back (form for conference permission) it gets lost and they don't understand that they are supposed to do and so maybe you should keep them until she has actually gone to the conference and then she can put in the actual expense claim ... it is only that thirty dollars registration but then there will be mileage. So then after can you remember that.. (secretary interrupts - indistinct)

P Yes, but she hasn't gone yet. You can't send it in for payment until she has gone. I am supposed to give it back and she is supposed to hand it back to me. But they always foul that up some how. That is too complicated for people. (Walks out into the Hall and down to his office)

P Oh! My gosh, this place looks like a miniature television studio. There is a teacher coming in in a few minutes so we should give her a place to sit, can that just go on the floor somewhere? (equipment had been on a chair.) (we move it)

(hall way noise and paper shuffling for 70 seconds) (person whistling in hall way)(Paper noise additional 50 seconds)

P Did you get in touch with Mrs. (Name Deleted) this morning about (Name Deleted) medical appointment (on phone to secretary)? Oh good, and wasn't legitimate? Oh she did manage to make it at the same time. Mrs. (Name Deleted) was extremely doubtful too. (listens 15 s) Ok. I told (Name Deleted) but it doesn't seem to sink in does it. Ok, thank you. (quiet 65 s).

(Footsteps in hall way)

P (Name Deleted)!

T (come in)

P Do we need to call somebody or about that conference or did you look after the registration? I signed the form to approve it.

T I saw that and I could phone about that.

P Ok

T I am doing a practice with them right now. I am going to need help with those risers for the open house.

P Oh, ok.

T (indistinct, asks for the caretaker)

P He is around, I just saw him go by the door about thirty seconds ago so (Secretary's Name Deleted) can just page him.

(Hall way noise and paper shuffling 50 seconds)

P Come in.

T Are you busy.

P No, not especially.

T This should not take very long.

P I just looked at that other thing about Chickaloo visits and just put it in mailboxes, for your information in case you should want to go. I don't even know where the place is.

T Neither do I, I didn't even read it, I just took it out of the mailbox. Ok! We decided to have our field day on June tenth. Does that conflict with anything?

P Um ... just ..

T That is a Friday, I did not know when the Junior high one is or the county one.

P (Looking at Calendar) I think that the county one is the week before that on the third, so the tenth should be Ok. That is the Junior High's Prom date, but that won't affect the field day.

T (Indistinct)

P Sure....Sure.

T I don't think we will need the gym and they will be setting up for the prom anyway.

P That is right.

T The only thing we use the gym for is kind of getting everyone organized first thing in the morning.

P That would be ok.

T Awards, we were going to go with the same system of awards that we had last year. Individual in the classroom.

P That is at the end of the year?

T At the end of the year, yes.

P Ok. Individual and in the classrooms - yea, that worked well last year.

T The parents seemed to like it. (indistinct)

Report cards - I think that everyone is going to read the comments on the division report cards. (Indistinct)

P Now they wouldn't have to be the same. Like, I got a letter today from - you know I had said that I had sent away for umpteen different report cards. And here I got one back today from School Division and it says 'Dear Mr. Anthony, Thank you for your recent inquiry regarding report cards. Each school in this division and sometimes each level within the school has its own report cards. If you would like to be more specific, we could advise you of the schools who offer that level and you could contact that principal directly.' I would not want to go to that bother, but actually there is not any reason why grade three has to be the same as grade one even.

T Yea. I know that the grade ones are more into effort marks - you know "Very good" ....(indistinct) I think that they might like to look at something like that.

P The only thing, I think that for ease of printing, is that if we could keep the common format to the extent that we could have a common cover. So that they would all be the same size, but outside of that there would be no reason why grade ones couldn't be different from grade threes.

T Good. (indistinct 15 s) Texts - for the grade one, they are looking at the language series. They don't know what the registration is going to be and so they do not know if they need another class set or not.

P When we started out last year, one room was doing that Networks and then when they got consolidated into two, neither (Name Deleted) nor (Name

Deleted) wanted to do Networks so we were saying that it was just easier to borrow them than order them so we will need some.

T Nelson isn't even authorized any more, because it is being revised.

P So we will need one set for sure.

T Yes.

P Ok.

T So whether it is going to be Impressions or Networks or revised Nelson, I don't know what we are going to do.

P When we know for sure the staff, then we can have a meeting of grade one teachers and we can then pick out which one they want to do. I was just thinking, how important is it that everyone use the same one and that it be the same series in grade two? Is that important?

T No.

P No! Ok

T We talked about that too. And it all depends on what the individual teacher likes.. (someone) likes Networks and (?) likes Impressions. I myself think that it doesn't make much of a difference.

P Some teachers want something that is much more structured and then others don't.

T So for grade two, next year we are looking at what three classes of grade two?

P Yes

T We have one set of Impressions and (indistinct) .

P We will probably have to order some anyway. This will have to be tentative anyway until the board meeting when we fix the exact size of the staff. And then we need to look at people's individual wishes, but we were thinking of having two threes and two twos and a combined two three. Because the twos would be a bit much for just two rooms but they would be too few for three. So that is one possibility, but that would still mean that you would need more of one series than we have now.

T The grade threes it is the same there (Indistinct 25 s)

P We can afford a bit because I thought we were going to have to make a heavy outlay in the Junior High for the new Math program. It has to be done soon, but the government is going to give us a special grant. So that we don't have to really pay for and so we do have some money we can use. Not everyone could have new readers all at once, but some.

T (indistinct 35 s) Field trips we wanted to get together as a group and plan what field trips were going to be gone on in each grade level so that there wouldn't be any duplication.

P That is good.

T. We didn't have time for that but still want to do it.

(Laughter)

T Ok, then Bye Bye.

P Bye.

APPENDIX 4

Sample of Observation Notes

This appendix includes a retyped section of the observation notes. These notes were recorded in longhand. A line of dashes indicates a break in the observations, most commonly due to the researcher not being able to write fast enough to record everything. After the observation session and before the reflective interview, a short time was taken to review these notes and list some questions which have been included in the observation notes. Names have been deleted to ensure anonymity. Questions were written in the margins and between comments. In this account, they are indented.

Observation Notes - April 18, 1988

- Ron met me at the door with a comment that he was sure that all the interesting stuff had already happened today, it had been busy.
- Met teacher A on way into staff room and agreed to meet her in about ten minutes.
- in staff room, refilled coffee cup and carried it out through the work room and general office.
- checked mailbox and removed a number of papers. Read and then signed a teacher's conference request form and left it with the secretary. Discussed conference forms and the procedure with the secretary. Questioned the filing system.

What about forms and procedures in this school? What systems are in place and for what? What are Ron's thoughts about the forms?

- went to Ron's office. Asked me to rearrange some of the equipment to make room for the teacher who was coming in.
- Sorted through some papers on his desk.
- Glanced up when he heard someone whistling as they went down the hallway - office door open.
- on the phone; checked with secretary about a student's absence
- back to the papers on his desk.

- noticed a teacher B walking down the hallway, called to her, asked about the conference form he had just approved, discussed moving risers into the gym for a music production.

- 2:13:14

- sorted papers on desk

- 2:14:08

- teacher A came back in to ask about a planned field day.

teacher B came in and asked asked about caretaker to help her with the risers.

- Ron sent her to the general office to have the secretary page the caretaker.

Field day - I think they mean a track meet for the elementary.

- Teacher asked about using the gym early in the day to organize groups. Ron commented that it should be Ok for that as it would be set up for the Prom.

-next topic - awards procedure, teacher reported that same format as last year was favoured. Ron agrees.

This seems to be a report by a teacher about a meeting. Why are they reporting to him? Why did he not attend? Does he attend meetings? What sort of meetings are held by the staff? who calls meetings?

- Talking about Report Cards - teacher says that teachers in different grades are in favour of different types of report cards.

- Ron reports on some attempts to gather info from other jurisdictions. Suggested different format for each grade with a common cover.

What is the story behind this issue? what about uniformity, is it important? When?

- Teacher moved on to discuss textbooks

- reviewed historical perspective, who had used what.

- Ron and the teacher discussed how many class sets of what series were available, Ron made a note of what was needed.

- Teacher asked if Ron felt that everyone needed to be in the same series. Ron did not think so and commented that it was more important that the teacher be happy with what they were using.

Dig deeper here - What are Ron's ideas about teacher involvement in decision making? Autonomy?

- Grade two reading series discussed and Ron was asked about how many classes there would be. He responded that the board had to make a decision . (teacher is leaning forward - seems really confident.)

Ask about staffing - What about changing grades? who makes the decisions? On What basis?

- Ron said they could have some flexibility in buying reading texts as there was a special government grant for texts in Jr. High Math.

- teacher smiled and said that they did not get around to talking about math texts.

- Teacher reported that the group would like to set up an annual schedule for field trips so that they avoided repeating trips.

- teacher commented that they did not finish their agenda.

- 2:25:25

- Ron reviewed what the teacher had reported from the meeting. the teacher agreed that that was accurate and left.

APPENDIX 5

SAMPLE OF A REFLECTIVE INTERVIEW

This appendix includes a section of the tape recorded transcripts from a reflective interview. This selection is printed with normal margins, but for data analysis purposes, a three inch right margin was used to provide room for written comments and questions which arose as the analysis proceeded. Names have been deleted to ensure anonymity. This interview followed the first observation of a portion of a regular day.

Thesis Data- April 18, 1988

Reflective Interview #1

R The second part of this process for today - we have just about done most of it. I asked you a bunch of questions there in your office. So probably this procedure will work better when I come in in the morning and we have a busy stretch of the day to work on. After we have gone through an observation time where I have kept track, I would like you to go back and reflect on why you did what you did when you did it, as much as you can remember. There is only really that first stretch in there, after being in the staff room for recess, you set up that appointment with a teacher and checked your mailbox on the way back. You stopped and dealt with a conference form. And discussed the form with the secretary and thought about setting up a different filling system for the forms. They seem to have gone astray lately have they?

p Well, I don't know how the form could be changed. It has two parts to it. The front part of it - the top part of it, they are to present it to me to get approval to go to the conference. Then they are supposed to get it back and that is their approval to make arrangements and they are to show that to the vice-principal so

that she knows to get them a sub if one is required. The bottom part of the form is an actual statement of expenses and of course you hand that back in after the event and get my signature again and then it goes to the Secretary-treasurer for reimbursement. But they somehow don't seem able to follow this. I don't get them back or they do something else with them. So I just decided that it would be better if we kept them and then when the person came back we said give us your bills and we will make out the form.

R So once it comes to you and to the vice principal for the subs, and then into the file.

P And then after the event, we will dig it out and submit it to the secretary treasurer so they get paid.

R Right. Then you went to your office and started to work your way through a pile of papers that were in the front and centre pile. And you leave your office door open. Someone went down the hall whistling and you looked up to see who it was. You Phoned to the office to check on a student's absence. Was that part of the grade nines that had been -- , I think I have down.

P Yea. ,

R I did not get a name down.

P Yes there was a suspicious absence this morning that the secretary was checking on and I had forgotten to ask at noon if she had gotten through.

R Then you went back to the papers on your desk. Were those student papers?

P (Laughs) They were actually essays on the importance of time that these girls had had to write because they had been late on Friday for the subs class.

R Then was walking down the hall and you called her in to check about the conference and she raised the issue about the risers and I think that she raised a couple of other issues. Then you worked for another half a minute on the papers and a different teacher came in to talk about the field day. came back in to check about the risers and with the other teacher, you talked about a whole bunch of issues. The first one was the date and the fact that the prom for the Junior High was happening that date so that they couldn't plan to go into the gym if it rained out there. They mentioned about awards.

P You see this was - the primary division had a meeting and that was all the items they talked about at their meeting. We used to have the awards - well when I first came, the awards were one massive night. You had Junior Highs and Elementary all mixed up and you would have the grade three attendance award and the grade nine math achievement award and all of that stuff given out at the same time. And it was not I did not think at all successful. So the next year, we broke it and we had them on successive nights. The elementary one was really good, but the Junior High one was not good. So we switched it and we kept the elementary one in the evening but we changed the Junior high to during the school day on the last day. I thought that we would get no parents at all because we were having it at ten in the morning on the last day of school and we got more parents than we did in the evening and of course we had all of the kids because of course the kids would not have come back otherwise. You would be giving out attendance awards to kids who weren't even there. That doesn't make sense. So that, then the elementary decided last year that they really wanted to make their awards not so competitive because -- well particularly the little ones don't really understand.

R Right.

P So they decided to do it in their own individual classrooms. Some of the grades combine so that you may have had all of the grade fours at one time sort of thing. But, ah, They gave them out that way and they could invite the parents to come if they wished.

R So each class then sets up their own award ceremony.

P Award event - they are during the day now. So that is what she was talking about that they wanted to do the same thing this year. In my opinion, it worked very well last year and so I don't know why you would change it.

R It is interesting - are your awards - well there are attendance awards that you have mentioned and some academic awards you have mentioned. Do the awards tend to be more academic and attendance or are there sports awards?

P Well in the Junior high ones were we still give them out on an all together basis, there is a subject award in each grade and then there is the overall achievement in grade nine which has a check with it from somebody- the school board. The Legion gives one for Math. The Royal Purple one is for most improved student in each grade gets a book from the Royal Purple. The best or top industrial arts student gets a hammer fro somebody and the best home economics student gets a cookbook from the Women's Institute. And then there are some general competition awards. There is one given out in the memory of the priest who was here when the separate school was organized, Father and that award is given to the best all around student taking into account marks, citizenship and so on. And then there is one given by the parents of a deceased former student who died of leukaemia and that one is for the student who really tries but didn't

quite come in at the top. That one is mainly athletics, but is for one who really put forward a good effort. Then there is the camping awards for grade nine - best all around campers. A lady who went to the camp when her daughter was in grade nine thought that it was so great that she donated this award. Then there is the honor role for each grade.

R It still sounds like a very much academic bias in this school.

P Yes, yes.

R Which is nice, all the literature says that the effective schools have an academic bias.

Then you went through text books. I was really interested in the what some people would call the hodge podge of different reading series you are basically willing to authorize.

P That is another case of our ah . Well maybe some people would say that was a lack of leadership. But I can't see anything wrong with the different ones. You remember that I did ask her if she felt there was anything different because at one time we thought that you had to be in one series all the way through because one built on the other from the previous grade. Then if you changed, you changed one grade at a time. But I don't think that with these modern series, that that is supposed to make any difference.

R They are more self contained

P Particularly the "Whole Language" ones.

R That one I have never taught. I think that I was taught using a whole language approach, but I am not sure.

P Well I was, but we called it Enterprise. When I went to school, it was a wholistic approach, but we called it enterprise.

R Right. that is where I asked about the giving decisions to your staff. A lot supportive comments, reinforcing what the lady had been doing and then you talked about the behavior problems. You wrapped up the meeting. See said that she was done and you wrapped it up and reviewed some of the main points. Is that a conscious thing?

P Yea. I think so to make sure that we both understood what was going to happen next. I have sometimes found that I was under the impression that somebody was going to do something and they were not under the same impression with the result that it did not get done. So I always try to make sure that we both understand if there is going to be some follow-up action, what it is going to be and who is going to do it.

R Right. You made notes about the series and grades which needed books to be ordered as well. Were those notes to go to board meeting?

P Just for my on reference. That is entirely a school decision.